

Saturday September 7 1996

Abu Dhabi D 8.50	Hong Kong HK\$ 25	Oman OR 1.00
Albania L 200	Hungary F 200	Pakistan R 70
Austria F 70	Indonesia Rp 180	Poland Z 6.20
Austria AS 30	Italy L 3.000	Portugal E 240
Bahrain B 1.000	Japan Y 1.000	Qatar Q 8.50
Belgium BF 85	Korea S 1.000	Romania US\$ 2.00
Bulgaria B 1.000	Malaysia M 1.000	Saudi Arabia R 10
Canada C 1.000	Malta M 1.000	Slovenia S 1.20
Czech Republic KC50	Mexico M 1.000	Slovakia S 1.20
Denmark DK 15	Netherlands G 4.00	Spain P 200
Denmark DK 15	Norway N 1.000	Sweden S 1.20
Egypt E 6.50	Poland Z 6.20	Switzerland SF 3.20
France F 270	Portugal E 240	Taiwan T 1.000
Germany DM 3.50	Romania US\$ 2.00	Turkey TL 100.000
Greece D 400	Saudi Arabia R 10	USA US\$ 2.00
	Slovenia S 1.20	
	Slovakia S 1.20	
	Spain P 200	
	Sweden S 1.20	
	Switzerland SF 3.20	
	Taiwan T 1.000	
	Turkey TL 100.000	
	USA US\$ 2.00	

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46.652

Reflect on the past seven days with top Guardian writers Joanna Coles Interview

the week

After Stalin: Jacko

Michael Jackson conquers Prague

Cut down in his prime

John Wayne Bobbitt

Plus: Jeremy Hardy, Simon Hoggart

Screens go up around nude in the nave

SCREENS are being placed around a 12ft high video image of a naked man floating in a tank of water to spare the blushes of visitors to Durham Cathedral — and defuse the latest public art row to hit the North-east, writes Claire Armistead.

The image, which is projected on a screen in the nave of the cathedral, is the work of American video artist Bill Viola and has been installed as part of the North-east's Year of Visual Arts. It was commissioned by the Chaplaincy for the Arts in the North-east of England at a cost of £196,000, with just under half the money coming from the National Lottery.

The dean of the cathedral, the Very Reverend John Arnold, said he found Mr Viola's work, called *The Messenger*, "deeply moving" and did not find anything offensive in it, though he recognised that others might.

On returning from holiday yesterday, he took legal advice before deciding that the work should remain uncensored but concealed behind screens. Earlier plans to impose an electronic signet were abandoned.

Mr Viola remains philosophical: "I can well understand why people would be nervous. This is their place after all."

After Durham, *The Messenger* may tour before finding a home at the old Baltic Flour Mills in Gateshead.

The North-east has already been at the centre of rows over investment in contemporary art this year. Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* — a huge figure overlooking Gateshead — was dismissed by critics as an eyesore and a disgrace. Last week, an application by another American, James Turrell, to design a "sky-space" in a disused quarry and fly-tip in the Pennines, was turned down after being attacked in the tabloids and subjected to a local smear campaign.



Artist Bill Viola and his video in Durham Cathedral: 'I understand why people would be nervous' PHOTOGRAPH: WILL WALKER

Blair faces scorn over tax switch

THE Labour leader, Tony Blair, last night backed his embattled Scottish spokesman, George Robertson, in the face of a torrent of anger, ridicule and resignation calls that followed abandonment of a devolution policy which was just six days old.

Less than a week after Labour's divided Scottish executive endorsed Mr Blair's two-question referendum plan, Mr Robertson revealed that he wanted to drop the idea of a second referendum on the tax issue which had been appended to clinch last Saturday's majority.

The U-turn is the third devolution policy refinement in just over two months and it stunned Labour activists north of the border.

Relief at the ditching of the almost universally derided second referendum was matched by fury at the evidence of Walworth Road's contempt for the rulings of its Scottish executive.

Senior ministers, including the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, and the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, who will renew calls for Mr Robertson's dismissal at a Tory rally for the union in Perth today, were joined in their condemnation by scornful Scottish Nationalists and dismayed Liberal Democrats.

Mr Robertson, who saw Labour's poll rating in Scotland slip to 48 per cent and the SNP's rise nine points to 29 per cent this week, insisted the latest move was not a change in policy, only "a change in tactics" designed to rid the party of an idea which commanded little or no support.

He nonetheless paid a harsh price at the end of a week in which John Major visited Glasgow to warn that Labour's proposed Scottish assembly, with its power to levy a 3p in the pound "airtax" would jeopardise revived prosperity and the 300-year-old union with England.

Last night Mr Blair's office said: "Tony is 100 per cent behind George. This initiative has come from George, and Tony gives him his full support. Tony is very happy with what's happened today."

Mr Forsyth claimed Labour's policy on devolution was in "an extraordinary shambles." He said Mr Robertson had been betrayed by Mr Blair, much as happened when the original referendum U-turn was imposed on Scots activists on June 26.

Mr Forsyth yesterday told Radio 4's *World at One*: "We had George Robertson challenging the Prime Minister to respond to their new policy on Tuesday, and almost before we had time to answer they had changed the policy. I think he has been betrayed by his leader."

He added: "This policy has been made in Islington and made by people who have little understanding or sensitivity towards the interests of Scotland."

It was fear that the Scottish executive might reject the Blair-Robertson referendum scheme that made Mr Robertson accept Saturday's second referendum idea, proposed by Mohammed Sarwar, Labour's candidate in Govan. It would have given voters a second vote before the proposed assembly actually used its tax powers.

Behind the manoeuvres are Labour fears that Mr Major will use the issue to arouse English concern that New Labour is still a high tax party.

For that reason many pro-devolution Scots suspected Mr Blair had engineered a referendum with a tax question precisely so that voters would reject it.

Mr Robertson dismissed such talk. "We listened to the people and there was no support for the idea of the second referendum," he said. "The policy for devolution was designed in Scotland and it hasn't been changed one dot or comma."

The Liberal Democrat spokesman on Scottish affairs Jim Wallace, claimed Labour had "driven themselves into a cul-de-sac and they are trying now to get out."

Ian Smart, secretary of the pro-home rule grouping, Scottish Labour Action, which led the campaign against the second referendum which produced last Saturday's contentious compromise, said: "We regard this as a move in the right direction: two questions is clearly better than three."

Mr Sarwar, the executive member who helped to engineer the ill-fated proposal designed to bridge the gap between the leadership and rebels who wanted to drop the question on the parliament's tax-varying status, applauded the party's change of heart.

"I am glad we have had the courage to accept the people's view," he said. "It is arrogant for any party to stick to policies that are unpopular."

Scottish conundrum, page 4; Leader comment, page 8

Justice on trial in rape victim's court ordeal

Sue Quinn

VICTIM support groups and women's organisations last night called for a review of the way rape trials are conducted after a Japanese student was forced to spend 31 hours in the witness box reliving her ordeal which ended with her attackers receiving jail sentences of up to 10 years.

The case, in which the victim was cross-examined by barristers representing each of her five attackers over a record 12 days, prompted calls for the Bar Council to introduce new procedures to eliminate unnecessary, repetitive and traumatic questioning in rape trials.

The young men yesterday received sentences of between 30 months and 10 years for the "brutal" gang rape of the 20-year-old woman over a two-day period.

Judge Graham Boal told them at the Old Bailey: "We say you behaved like animals

would do an injustice to the animal kingdom. Quite how a human being treats someone as you treated her almost defies belief."

The woman, fearful of causing distress to her conservative Japanese family, chose to go through the trial alone.

Afterwards, a spokeswoman for Victim Support, Helen Peggs, said the case highlighted the need for limits to be placed on the length of questioning and the type of questions asked of rape victims.

"There must be a way of ensuring that if duplication happens, it really is necessary. Otherwise the end product will be that witnesses are so distressed they are unable to give evidence."

"The defendants have rights, of course, but you can't have a fair trial if the witness can't cope with the way the trial is conducted."

The vice-president of the National Council of Women, Tobe Aleksander, said: "We have to ensure the defendant

'Strike-breaking' leak lifts stakes in mail dispute

Soumas Milne
Labour Editor

EVIDENCE that regional Post Office managers are making secret plans to recruit a strike-breaking army has emerged as Communication Workers' Union representatives from around the country prepare to decide the future of the dispute.

A letter to Home Counties and East Anglian recruitment agencies, marked "in strictest commercial confidence", reveals that "Royal Mail Anglia is looking to recruit 4,600 casual employees for use in the event of industrial action being stepped up" from September 16.

Signed by the area personnel manager, Alan Marsden, and dated September 4, the letter asks if companies can help with "transportation of casual employees into designated Royal Mail premises, possibly crossing picket lines". It describes the mass recruitment as a "very sensitive area for Royal Mail in view of the current industrial climate".

A Royal Mail spokesman said yesterday Mr Marsden had been "over-enthusiastic and got carried away", but

deputy general secretary, yesterday derided the suggestion that Mr Marsden's action was an isolated move, and accused senior Post Office managers who refused to meet him this week for fresh talks — of wanting a full-scale confrontation.

"This is the same board that supported Michael Heseltine's privatisation plans," Mr Hodgson said. "It makes you wonder whether they see escalation as a way of achieving privatisation by the back door."

If Royal Mail Anglia's strike-breaking scheme was repeated on a national scale, it would involve recruiting about 40,000 casual workers.

The leak could scarcely come at a more sensitive time in the dispute over flexible working, hours and pay, which has all but shut down the postal service eight times since the end of June. On Monday 20 CWU divisional representatives will meet the postal executive in London to plan its next move.

Derek Hodgson, the CWU's

Inside
Cheshire social workers launched an inquiry into the case of a four-year-old, found at home after her mother went on holiday to Spain. **4**

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Sport
Plans for a £3.5 million media centre were unveiled over the hallowed Lord's turf like the space-craft in Independence Day. **24**

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Jobs report gives boost to Clinton

Mark Tran in New York

BOB Dole's chances of beating President Bill Clinton in November looked increasingly hopeless yesterday as the jobs report showed American unemployment for August sinking to its lowest level for seven years.

Mr Clinton, campaigning in the Republican stronghold of Florida, hailed the statistics as good news that showed the economy was on the right track. He said the August unemployment rate — down to 5.1 per cent from 5.4 per cent in July — and the creation of nearly half a million jobs in those two months were "the latest evidence of strong growth, the highest consumer confidence in years".

With only nine weeks left until the presidential vote, the jobs statistics are an enormous boost for Mr Clinton, who already enjoys a double-digit lead over his Republican challenger. Polls put Mr Clinton 10-17 points ahead of Mr Dole.

It is a truism of American presidential politics that an incumbent will retain the White House in an election year if the economy is healthy. Mr Clinton's presence in Florida — which no Democratic presidential candidate has carried in 20 years — reflected his confidence. Voters are beginning to give him credit for the healthy economy, although many economists will argue that the Federal Reserve (the United States central bank) holds the real key — and it is under pressure to raise interest rates by as much as 0.5 per

cent to prevent the economy overheating.

Nonetheless, a New York Times/CBS poll showed that 55 per cent of Americans approve of Mr Clinton's handling of the economy — the highest rating he has ever received for his economic record. Six out of seven of those who approve say they will vote for him.

For most of his presidency, the percentage of Americans favouring Mr Clinton's handling of the economy has hovered in the thirties and forties. Public anxiety over "downsizing" has also eased after a stream of positive economic figures.

Meanwhile, Mr Dole's tax-cut gambit has flopped. An ABC-Washington Post survey found that two-thirds thought Mr Dole could not cut taxes and reduce the budget deficit at the same time, as he claims he would. In promising a big tax cut, Mr Dole has compromised his reputation for integrity on the deficit.

It was Mr Dole who coined the phrase "voodoo economics" to ridicule George Bush's pledge to cut taxes and balance the budget. To add insult to injury, 41 per cent of people in the ABC-Post poll trust Mr Clinton more than Mr Dole to stem the tide of red ink, with 40 per cent favouring Mr Dole. This reverses a 47-39 Dole edge a month ago.

The vigour of the economy is the most intractable obstacle to Mr Dole's presidential aspirations. He has sought to make headway by criticising the pace of growth, but that argument fell flat when second-quarter growth came in at a stunning annual rate of 4.8 per cent.

Man loses right to bury his wife

Erland Clouston

AN ILLITERATE Newcastle traveller was yesterday refused the right to bury his wife in England after a judge decreed he had delayed too long in organising her funeral.

Instead, Margaret Willis will be interred outside Edinburgh this morning in a ceremony arranged by members of her Scottish family who had effectively seized control of the 37-year-old's corpse.

Lord Gill's refusal to sustain the interim interdict granted on Wednesday to Kenny Willis was greeted with jubilation by the dozen Edinburgh-based relatives of Mrs Willis, who had crowded into the Court of Session to hear the judge's decision.

"It is dreadful that this man has put the family through so much pain and hurt," said William McCallum, Margaret Willis's brother. He gave an undertaking in court, though, that Mr Willis, who did not attend the hearing, could participate in today's funeral service at St Columba's Episcopal church in Edinburgh city centre.

The already fraught proceedings were given extra publicity by the acknowledgment that the body of Mrs Willis, who died after an accidental overdose on the night of August 28, was liable to start deteriorating.



Widower Kenny Willis, with three of his children

pay the £40 weekly fee for preserving her corpse indefinitely in the Edinburgh city mortuary.

His in-laws countered with assertions that the father of four could not afford the payments. The court was also told that the Scottish family's undertaker had warned that, despite embalming and "hygienic treatment," Mrs Willis's body would start to decompose within a week.

At issue in the 90-minute hearing were the couple's relationship. Mr Willis's actions when he heard of his wife's death, and a spouse's right to a deceased partner's remains.

However, Alastair Kinroy, for Mr Willis, said Margaret had phoned her husband on August 28 to warn him of her impending return to England. When she did not appear, Mr Willis phoned next day to be told she had died.

According to Mr Willis, he was told after he arrived in Edinburgh that he could take

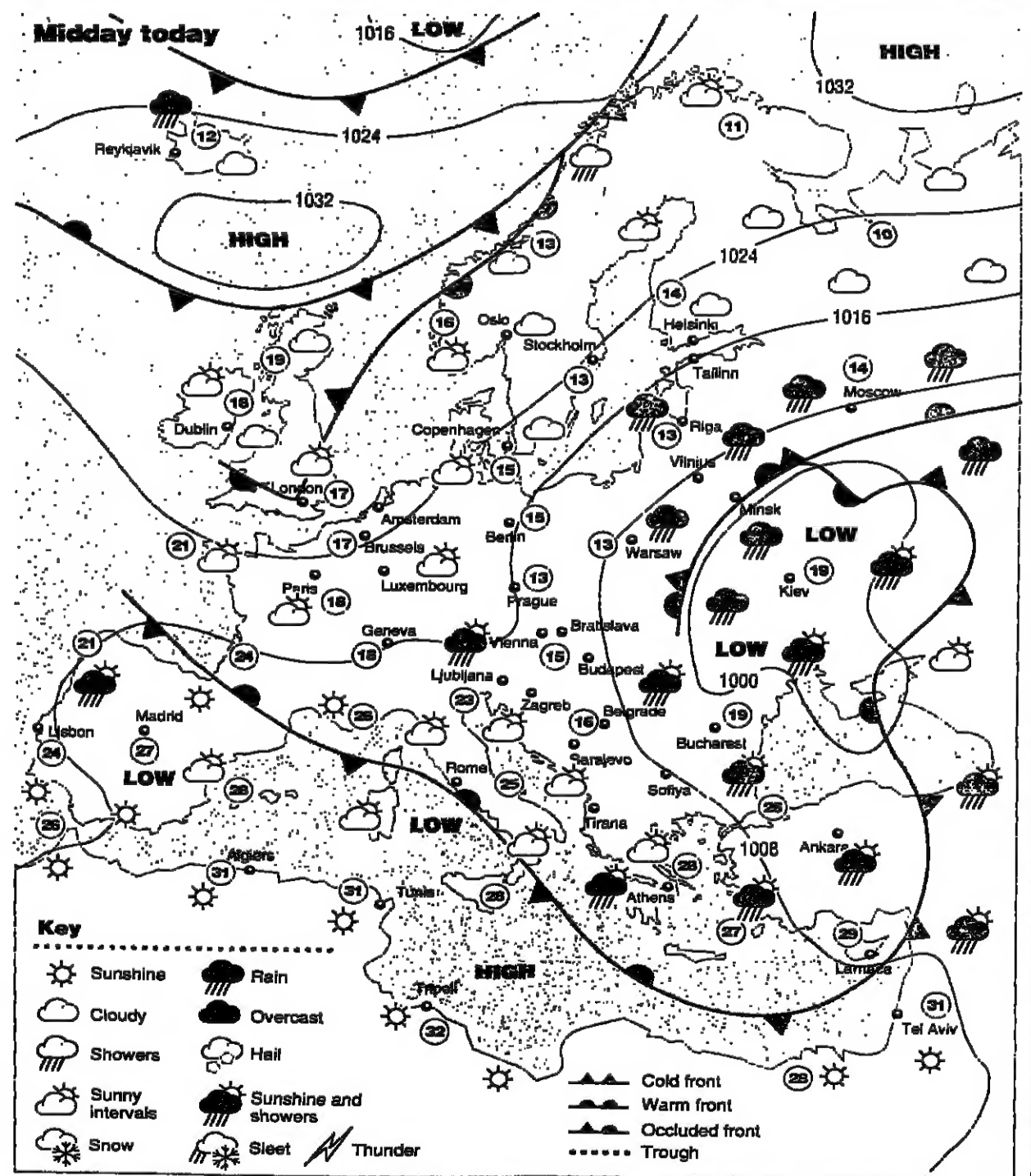
his wife's body back to Newcastle. When he heard that the McCallum family had other plans, he returned to Newcastle, where his inability to read or write delayed his engaging a Scottish solicitor until this Wednesday, the day before the funeral was due at Dalkeith.

The McCallums had alleged that Mr Willis had not returned to Newcastle but had been collaborating with the Scottish undertakers as

late as noon on the day before the burial.

Lord Gill, noting that Mr Willis had no alternative arrangements in place, said he should have acted as soon as he learned of his wife's death. Dismissing the mortuary option as "not an attractive proposal", the judge said it was now in the public interest that Mrs Willis should be buried "in a seemly way and with dignity and without undue delay".

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

City	Temp	Wind	Weather
Algiers	21	S	S
Amman	18	S	S
Amsterdam	18	S	S
Antwerp	18	S	S
Berlin	18	S	S
Bombay	28	S	S
Buenos Aires	18	S	S
Calcutta	28	S	S
Cairo	28	S	S
Canton	28	S	S
Cebu	28	S	S
Colon	28	S	S
Hankow	28	S	S
Hong Kong	28	S	S
Kobe	28	S	S
London	18	S	S
Lyons	18	S	S
Manila	28	S	S
Medan	28	S	S
Osaka	28	S	S
Paris	18	S	S
Perth	18	S	S
Rangoon	28	S	S
San Francisco	18	S	S
Singapore	28	S	S
Sourabaya	28	S	S
Tientsin	28	S	S
Yokohama	28	S	S

Around the world

City	Temp	Wind	Weather
Algeria	21	S	S
Amman	18	S	S
Amsterdam	18	S	S
Antwerp	18	S	S
Berlin	18	S	S
Bombay	28	S	S
Buenos Aires	18	S	S
Calcutta	28	S	S
Cairo	28	S	S
Canton	28	S	S
Cebu	28	S	S
Colon	28	S	S
Hankow	28	S	S
Hong Kong	28	S	S
Kobe	28	S	S
London	18	S	S
Lyons	18	S	S
Manila	28	S	S
Medan	28	S	S
Osaka	28	S	S
Paris	18	S	S
Perth	18	S	S
Rangoon	28	S	S
San Francisco	18	S	S
Singapore	28	S	S
Sourabaya	28	S	S
Tientsin	28	S	S
Yokohama	28	S	S

European weather outlook

High pressure centred to the north of the British Isles will maintain the chilly northerly airflow over Scandinavia for several more days. Today will be dry over most of Norway, Sweden and Denmark with a mix of clouds and sunny spells, but a few showers may skirt the Swedish east coast where it will again be very windy. Finland should also have a mainly dry day but it will become increasingly cloudy. Max temp 12-18C.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland.

Cool and breezy over eastern Germany and Austria with plenty of cloud and a scattering of showers, there may even be a little snow over the Austrian Alps. Remaining areas will be mainly dry with some sunshine. Max temp 14C-22C.

France.

Pressure remains quite high over France so it should be fine again today with plenty of warm sunshine, although the north-east coastal fringe may be cloudier and cooler. Max temp ranging from 17C on the north coast to 26C in the south.

Spain and Portugal.

Northern regions of Spain and Portugal will have a mix of sunny spells and a few showers, but much of the south will be quite sunny and hot. Highs 25-30C in the south, but nearer 20C in the far north.

Italy.

The relatively cool and unsettled weather will continue this weekend with occasional showers in most places, but there will also be some sunnier breaks. Max temp ranging from 20C in the far north to 25C from Rome southwards.

Greece.

Plenty of hot sunshine, but a build up of cloud will bring isolated heavy showers this afternoon. Max temp 26-30C.

Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1
8.00am Open University: Computers, Operating Systems, 1.18 Italian Grand Prix, 2.05 The Best of Bob Dylan, 3.00 The Return of the King, 4.00 The Return of the King, 5.00 The Return of the King, 6.00 The Return of the King, 7.00 The Return of the King, 8.00 The Return of the King, 9.00 The Return of the King, 10.00 The Return of the King, 11.00 The Return of the King, 12.00 The Return of the King.

BBC 2
7.00am Open University: Computers, Operating Systems, 1.18 Italian Grand Prix, 2.05 The Best of Bob Dylan, 3.00 The Return of the King, 4.00 The Return of the King, 5.00 The Return of the King, 6.00 The Return of the King, 7.00 The Return of the King, 8.00 The Return of the King, 9.00 The Return of the King, 10.00 The Return of the King, 11.00 The Return of the King, 12.00 The Return of the King.

BBC Prime
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am BBC World News, 9.00am BBC World News, 9.30am BBC World News, 10.00am BBC World News, 10.30am BBC World News, 11.00am BBC World News, 11.30am BBC World News, 12.00am BBC World News.

BBC World
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am BBC World News, 9.00am BBC World News, 9.30am BBC World News, 10.00am BBC World News, 10.30am BBC World News, 11.00am BBC World News, 11.30am BBC World News, 12.00am BBC World News.

Radio 4
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am BBC World News, 9.00am BBC World News, 9.30am BBC World News, 10.00am BBC World News, 10.30am BBC World News, 11.00am BBC World News, 11.30am BBC World News, 12.00am BBC World News.

Television and radio — Sunday

BBC 1
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am BBC World News, 9.00am BBC World News, 9.30am BBC World News, 10.00am BBC World News, 10.30am BBC World News, 11.00am BBC World News, 11.30am BBC World News, 12.00am BBC World News.

BBC 2
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am BBC World News, 9.00am BBC World News, 9.30am BBC World News, 10.00am BBC World News, 10.30am BBC World News, 11.00am BBC World News, 11.30am BBC World News, 12.00am BBC World News.

BBC Prime
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BBC World
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am BBC World News, 9.00am BBC World News, 9.30am BBC World News, 10.00am BBC World News, 10.30am BBC World News, 11.00am BBC World News, 11.30am BBC World News, 12.00am BBC World News.

Radio 4
8.00am BBC World News, 8.30am BBC World News, 9.00am BBC World News, 9.30am BBC World News, 10.00am BBC World News, 10.30am BBC World News, 11.00am BBC World News, 11.30am BBC World News, 12.00am BBC World News.

مركز من التحصيل

Individual backers like football club vice-chairman Matthew Harding set to challenge weakened unions as biggest contributors to party

Wealthy donors see off the barons

David Hencke discovers that Tony Blair's wooing of business is paying dividends but more is needed for election campaign

LABOUR was gloating quietly yesterday as Matthew Harding, the former Tesco boss who made £150 million on the Lloyd's insurance market and became vice-chairman of Chelsea Football Club, explained his decision to donate £1 million to the party.

"I believe that Tony Blair is the best leader for our country, and New Labour the best party to prepare our country for the future," he said. "I want to help Tony and the Labour Party to bring about change in this country."

"I have never believed that being wealthy means being Tory and I think New Labour has a far greater understanding of the enterprise economy than many people in the Tory Party do."

The announcement of the donation, much of which has already been handed over, was clearly timed to follow this week's seminar in which Mr Blair and colleagues sought to demonstrate that the party's policies would be good for enterprise. It also follows the news last weekend that the Political Animal Lobby has given the party a similar sum.

Mr Harding's largesse illustrates a strengthening trend for the party to rely increasingly on private donations for its income. Wealthy individuals could soon overtake old trade union barons as the biggest source of finance for New Labour.

One of the biggest advantages of Tony Blair's leadership has been the dramatic change in the party's bank balance. The wealthy seem more willing to support him at a time when Labour's traditional bankrollers, the trade union movement, have been considerably weakened.

Ten years ago Neil Kinnock was in hock to trade union barons who provided more than 77 per cent of its £5.8 million a year income. In 1995 that percentage had slumped to 54.2 per cent of a larger £12.5 million. By next year, following the two latest £1 million donations, it could fall below the crucial 50 per cent figure.

Meanwhile, membership — and more importantly member donors — have soared since 1992. Then, under John Smith, it was 279,000 with 3,500 making one-off donations and another 30,000 agreeing to give regularly through direct debits from bank accounts.

By the end of 1995, membership was up to 365,000, donors up to 83,500 and those regularly allowing Labour to dip into their bank accounts topping 55,000. Latest figures for membership suggest it will reach 400,000 this year. Last year about £1.6 million came from membership fees.

These figures will include Labour's Thousand Club, whose members pay £1,000 a year or more for meetings with the leadership, and its fundraising £450-a-head dinners at the Savoy to meet Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

The proportion of Labour's income from fund-raising activities jumped from 2.2 per cent in 1986 to 18.6 per cent of a much larger income last year.

Companies have started stepping in. The list of 17 donors released by the Labour Party recently shows that Pearson, the media group owning the Financial Times and Penguin Books, gave them £25,000; Tate and Lyle, £7,500; and a management company called GLC, about £30,000. A millionaire Labour supporting publisher, Paul Hamlyn, is

said to have given £800,000 towards the Road to the Manifesto promotion campaign. The biggest trade union donations still come from the GMB general union, the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, Unison, the Transport and General Workers' Union, the shop workers' union Usdaw, and the Communication Workers Union, currently being cold-shouldered by Labour over the postal dispute. Trade Unions for Labour, which represents a wide cross-section of the union movement, is also a large donor.

THERE is also the largely overlooked role of the bankers who lend Labour considerable sums so they can fight the elections. The Co-operative Bank allows the party to run up a £1 million overdraft and the City of London Bank Trust, are providing a £225,000 overdraft facility.

But despite the big rise in donations, Labour is still being overwhelmed by the huge expenditure required to run a modern election campaign. This year it ran up its first deficit for four years, moving from a surplus of £1.2 million in 1994 to a deficit of £452,000. The General Election Fund slipped from £4.5 million to £4.4 million.

A series of complex accounting changes — including revaluing and consolidating its £1.3 million property portfolio into its main accounts — led to a reduction in its overdraft from £1.1 million to £826,000.

Why did Labour overspend? It found itself having to pay out much more for campaigning. It went over budget on the 1995 local government election campaign and appeared to be caught out last year by the Tories' fast recovery from their huge

overspend. This year £1.3 million has been invested in a state-of-the-art media centre in Millbank Tower in London. A new computerised system, Excalibur, which promises to provide instant rebuttals to Tory propaganda, has also cost a small fortune.

Between now and polling day Labour faces far bigger bills. Trips to set up Labour groups abroad — in Cyprus, the United States, Spain and South Africa — are not cheap. Millions more will be needed in the next six months. Both parties started their campaigning earlier than expected and John Major looks certain to wait to the last possible date — May 1 next year — before going to the polls.

Labour's annual report warns that "the National Executive Committee is concerned to ensure that the pressures on the general fund do not preclude a return to the structural deficit position which so encumbered the party in the 1980s." Labour cannot rely on the unions to get them out of a hole, and this is not just because of the desire not to be seen relying on the unions. The unions simply will not have the cash.

The new claim that "the strength of the party is that it does not depend upon a few large donors, but has the financial support of many hundreds of thousands of people up and down the country" is unlikely to solve the financial problems either.

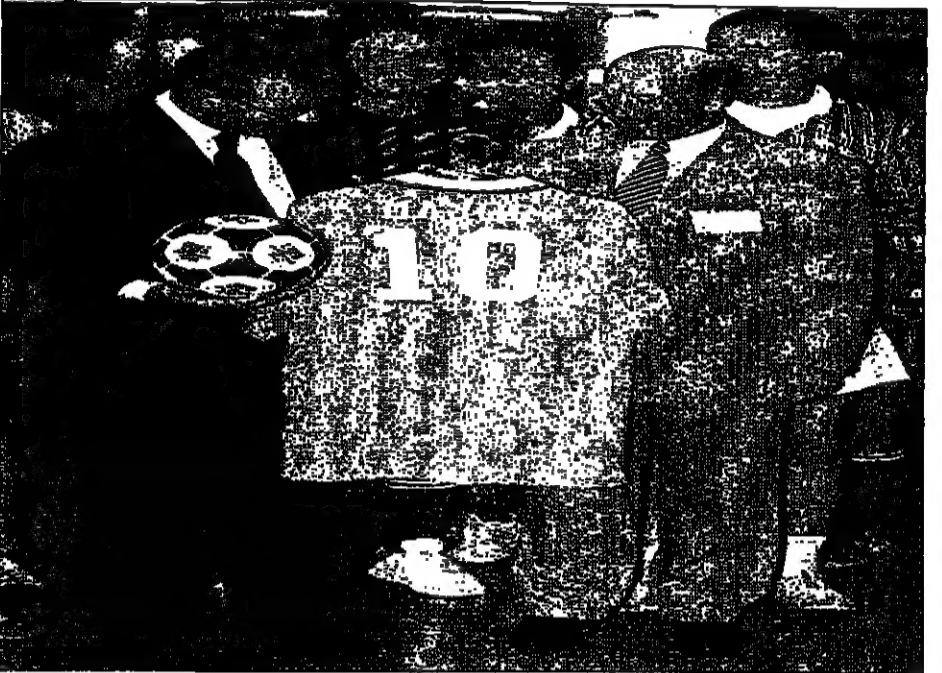
Instead, it is likely to need more Matthew Hardings to fight increasingly expensive election campaigns.

Leader comment, page 5

THE POLITICAL FOOTBALL: What happens when the urge to win extends off the pitch?



Chelsea and Labour supporter Kenny Baxter (above); heading practice for Tony Blair and Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan; and a new role for John Major



Blues fans cheer Labour supporter

John Duncan on the view from the stands in debate over £1m donation

THERE were no long queues of Chelsea fans lining the road from Fulham Broadway to cancel their season tickets yesterday, no true Blues spitting mad at the Reds under the Stamford Bridge bed.

Just a stream of hurried lunch-break arrivals picking up tickets for the next home game.

"I think Matthew Harding (above) should be able to do what he likes with his money," said Bill O'Regan. "I suppose it would be nice to see another million quid going on players at Chelsea, but he's obviously got plenty more where that came from, so he can do what he wants."

Others, like Kenny Baxter, a Fulham resident, were positively happy. "I'm Labour myself so I think it's great. Harding is genuinely a man of the people and it doesn't surprise me that he supports Labour. To be honest though I wish it could all be kept secret. I don't really like politics and sport getting mixed up. I hate all these politicians getting involved and claiming they are football supporters. David Mellor (above) is all right, but the rest..."

Mellor himself, a Chelsea regular, MP and presenter of Radio Five's 606 phone-

in, was putting a brave face on Harding's pro-Labour deal. "I wish he had bought a chunk of Georgi Kinkladze," he said. "We could have had his left leg and a bit of his right wrist for that money!"

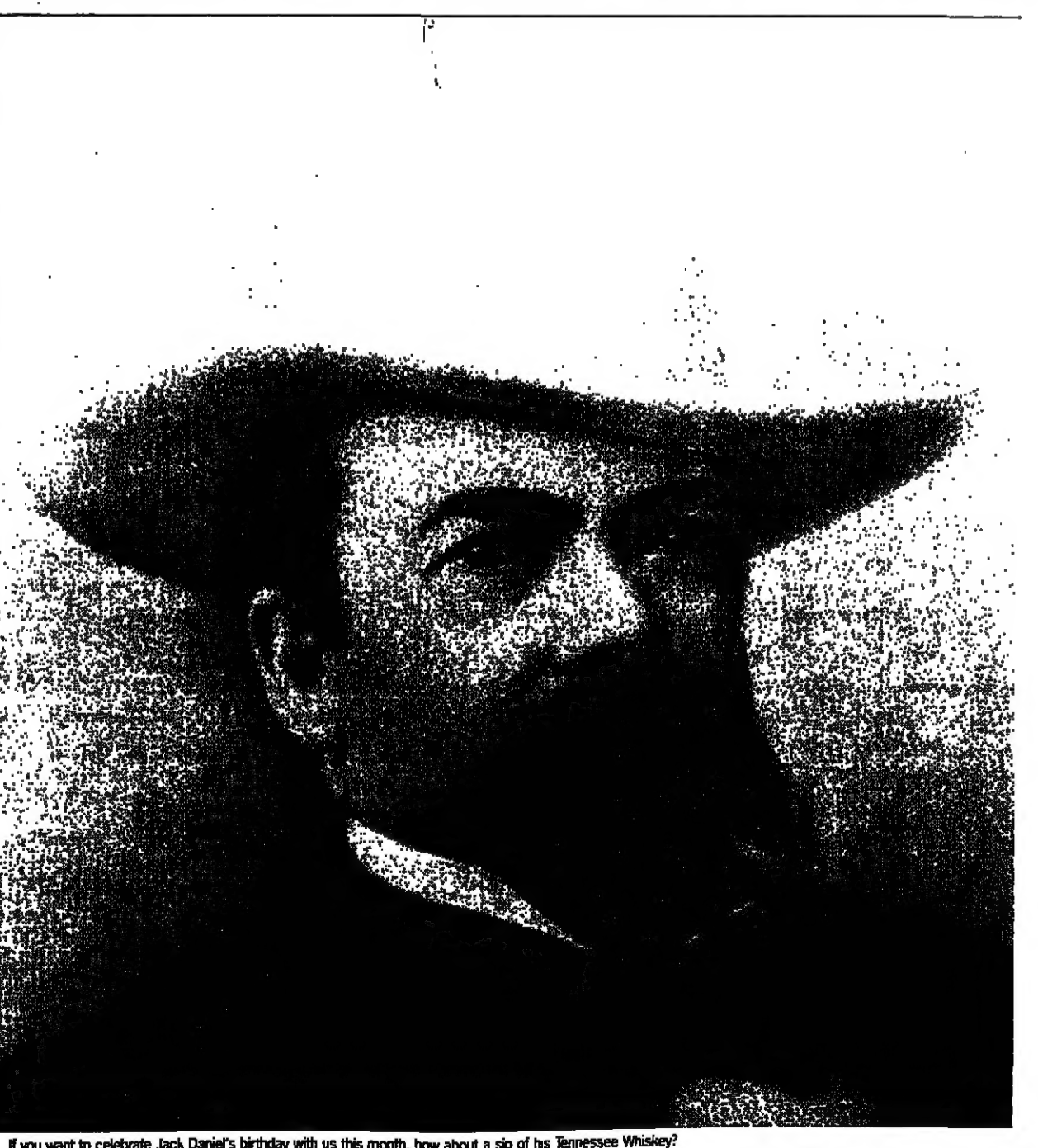
The wryest smiles came from those Chelsea fans who recalled the distinctly right-of-centre views of the club chairman Ken Bates (below), who has been known to expound upon patriotism, national service and free-market politics in his programme notes.

"I wouldn't mind being a fly on the wall at the next board meeting or the next time John Major comes to the Bridge," said Alan Holdaway, from Haslemere, Surrey. "It's not as if Bates and Harding need another thing they can disagree about, is it? The pair have fallen out regularly over the running of the club."

"There's no doubt it will wind up Ken," said Ross Fraser, chairman of the Chelsea Independent Supporters' Association. "I should think Mr Harding will be having a chuckle over his oysters and Guinness at the effect it has on him."

"But Matthew Harding is a genuine man of the people; it's not an affectation when you see him with supporters in the pub before games, or on the terraces. Ken's probably seething."

"Why should I be interested?" said Mr Bates, with the merest hint of gruffness. "I have no view of what Mr Harding does with his money." Maybe. Or perhaps the Brinks Mat van that left Chelsea at midday yesterday was sending a Bates contribution to Smith Square?



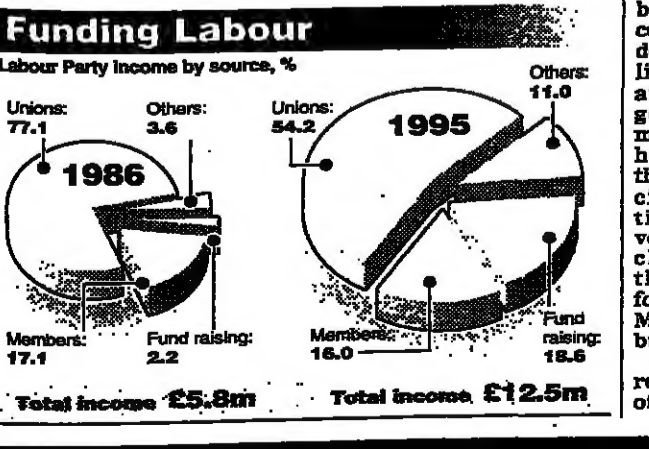
If you want to celebrate Jack Daniel's birthday with us this month, how about a sip of his Tennessee Whiskey?

THOUGH JACK DANIEL'S birthday is celebrated in September, the exact day and year remain a mystery.

His statue at our distillery reads that he was born in 1850. Yet other sources state it was September of 1846. And as to which day, that may never be known. Still, all the confusion has never stopped anyone from celebrating Mr. Jack's birthday. The way we look at it, there's any one of 30 days to choose from.



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY



John Wayne Bobbitt meets us in the bar of the Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street, and to the mild surprise of the other drinkers, promptly starts doing press-ups on the bar floor. "I've put on weight," he gasps, as his PR draws us to one side and hisses "You know he's just had a dick extension?" The Joanna Coles interview

The Week, page 13

Security pact sought as Nato prepares to expand West puts Kremlin ties top of agenda

Ian Traynor in Bonn

THE United States yesterday called for a new formal security charter between Nato and Russia and said an alliance summit would start negotiating entry to Nato with several East European countries early next year.

should be complete by the end of the year. A week of hectic diplomacy has centred on Germany: in separate meetings Mr Kohl has hosted talks with the French president and the US and Russian foreign ministers, has visited Ukraine and was due in Moscow today.

habit of dealing with Russia at their expense. German officials have stressed that during Mr Primakov's visit to Bonn this week there were fewer complaints than usual about Nato's proposed expansion. But he showed little sign of relenting in his opposition.

Architecture award fails to make space at Prado

Adela Gooch in Madrid reports on a new setback for Spain's renowned museum, which is in desperate need of repairs

AN international competition to solve the cramped space and poor facilities of the renowned Prado museum in Madrid has failed to produce a satisfactory proposal.

tain, with no clear timetable or plan for the start of the work. The Prado, an elegant stone palace, was built by Juan de Villanueva 177 years ago to house the royal art collection. There were modest additions at the beginning of the century and in the 1950s, but it is largely unchanged. It is one of the city's landmarks, located on Madrid's elegant central boulevard.

The repairs coincide with the 250th anniversary of the birth of Francisco de Goya, which has brought many extra visitors to Madrid. His works are now exhibited in temporary installations. The Prado, which has offices scattered around Madrid, is only able to show one-seventh of its collections. It has sparse library space and inadequate restoration facilities. Filing cabinets and archives litter its corridors and even the toilets.



A Srinagar anti-election protester hurls back a tear gas canister yesterday at some of the 200,000 troops overseeing the poll PHOTOGRAPH: SHERWIN CRASTO

Massive security as Kashmiris vote

Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi

AS 200,000 troops keep watch, and candidates go out to the people in bullet-proof cars, Kashmiris start voting in state elections today. The elections come more than six years after the sacking of the last Kashmiri state government, when an uprising against New Delhi's rule had yet to reach its height.

once the traditional party of government in Kashmir. "But at least we will get out of central rule and be masters of our own destiny," Dr Abdullah has promised greater autonomy for Kashmir, and a

Jammu, and the mountain plateau of Ladakh, which has a large Buddhist population, will also vote. The main separatist body, the All-Party Hurriyat Conference, has boycotted the polls, arguing that they ignore the basic Kashmiri demand for self-determination.

parliamentary election in May was marred by widespread coercion, with Indian troops using rifle butts to push people into polling stations; there was turnout of more than 40 per cent.

larger numbers to campaign meetings, and there are flags and other paraphernalia of an election. However, 12 of Dr Abdullah's party workers have been killed in attacks blamed on "renegades" — as the gunmen patronised by the Indian security forces are popularly known — and he has threatened to withdraw unless they are disarmed.

'At least we will get out of central rule and be masters of our own destiny'

'These will not be elections, but a well-organised military process'

News in brief

Mitterrand aides try to gag Elysée murder claims

FRENCH court will decide on Monday whether to give credence to one of the most persistent rumours of the François Mitterrand era — that his confidential adviser, François de Grossouvre, was murdered in the Elysée palace two years ago, writes Paul Webster in Paris.

mer gendarmerie bodyguards. In court, Mr Barril's lawyer, Jacques Vergès, claimed that the murder allegations were public knowledge and accused Mr Charasse and Mr Menagé of trying to muzzle the media because they dared not bring a libel action. "I defy you to bring a case," he said.

Khmer Rouge leader to claim no role in slaughter

JENG SARY, the renegade Khmer Rouge leader, is to publicly profess his innocence in the slaughter that claimed 2 million Cambodians in the 1970s, officials said yesterday.

deputy military chief of staff, confirmed that negotiations in Thailand on Thursday between Mr Sary and Cambodian officials had concluded with an agreement that Mr Sary would give a public account

of his past at a news conference on Monday covered by state radio and television. It will be held in Phnom Penh, a stronghold of Khmer Rouge dissidents near the border with Thailand. — AP.

CIA to review drug claims

INSISTING that he has found no evidence of wrongdoing, the CIA director John Deutch, has ordered his inspection-general to carry out an internal investigation into allegations raised in a series of articles in the San Jose Mercury News that the agency was involved in drug trafficking to support the Nicaraguan contra.

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IRAQ CRISIS: Atmosphere of near normality in Baghdad as troops dig in near Irbil

Behind the front line with the PUK

Chris Nuttall penetrates the war zone near Degala, moving between rival checkpoints

KOSRAT Rassur Ali is a prime minister turned Peshmerga again and seems much more at ease now, sitting in a frontline headquarters...

Mr Rassur Ali, and two of his personal guards died beside him before he escaped. He said 10 PUK members were killed and eight captured in an uneven contest...



Iraqi Kurdish fighters loyal to the Kurdistan Democracy Party keep watch in trenches in Degala, AK-47s at the ready

Crisis 'shows up EU rifts'

John Palmer in Tralee

EUROPEAN UNION foreign ministers met in Tralee, County Kerry, yesterday in an effort to unify policy, in particular towards Iraq...

Food prices are the main worry

Mariam Shahin in Baghdad

An atmosphere close to normality seems to have returned to Baghdad, less than two days after President Clinton unilaterally announced an end to the military operation against Iraq...

keep the price of foods down artificially for the time being. 'The prices went down last month as a result of the expectations of a better economic climate...

S African constitution thrown out

Chris McGreal in Johannesburg

SOUTH Africa's constitutional court threw out the country's new multi-racial constitution yesterday over the distribution of powers to the regions, union rights, and the independence of government watchdogs...

'usurpation of national power' which implied that KwaZulu-Natal thinks it is a sovereign state. The court's ruling on the national constitution appeared implicitly to recognise that the African National Congress (ANC) is likely to be the generation...

'Gulf war syndrome' report attacks Pentagon denials

Ian Katz in New York

A WHITE House investigation into the possible exposure of Gulf war veterans to chemical weapons has attacked the Pentagon for its insistence that servicemen did not come into contact with non-conventional weapons during Desert Storm...

the number of soldiers who may have been exposed to mustard gas and the deadly nerve agent Sarin when US troops destroyed an Iraqi munitions dump in March 1991. The damning report comes barely a week after it emerged that senior US government officials knew as early as November 1991 that the Kamisayah dump housed chemical weapons...

cal problems experienced by soldiers but concluded that there was 'no clinical evidence' for the existence of a 'Gulf war syndrome'. 'The department of defence's position has remained essentially unchanged, and that can be summarised as the 'three nos' - there was no use, there was no exposure, and there was no presence...

the credibility of the department of defence's internal investigation. Earlier this year around 150 soldiers who participated in the demolition of the Kamisayah dump were warned that they may have been exposed to Sarin and mustard gas. But investigators for the presidential panel found that the true number of troops who may have been affected could be as high as 1,100.

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Handwritten text in Arabic script: 'مكتبة الأصيل'

John Cheek

Voice of the Falklands

JOHAN CHEEK'S last illness was brutally sudden. He died at the age of 56 — a mere day to set his affairs in order. It was in character for him that by then he had tidily honoured two final public commitments. He chaired a meeting of the Falkland Islands Council's general purposes committee, and as chairman he gave his usual calm, coherent local radio interview to explain the committee's thinking to his electorate. By the time the interview, pre-recorded as usual, was broadcast last Tuesday, he had died of prostate cancer.

When I first heard this broadcasting service from a troopship arriving in Port Stanley harbour in 1983, the first thing that struck me was that in this community of 2,000 intimately interwoven people, the obituaries began not "has died" but "We have lost..."

In John Cheek, the Falklands have in the most staggering premature way lost the man who was in effect their foreign minister. He was by no means the only outstandingly able person to have emerged from this small population in recent times. But his public service spanned his homeland's most traumatic and dynamic 15 years.

He began in suspicion and watchfulness in the years before the 1982 Argentine invasion, when British govern-

ments were trying furtively to prepare the way for a hand-over. Cheek was a new councillor in a shabby, cash-starved colony where stood out as one of the young radical voices for more local democracy and welfare in a constitution discreetly ruled by expatriate officers and a governor's veto.

He reached a degree of world prominence during and after Argentina's occupation, when he was among the most ubiquitous and effective international speakers for the islanders' cause, not only impressing British and American television viewers but drawing tributes from Sir Nicholas Henderson, British ambassador to Washington during the 1982 conflict, and Sir Anthony Parsons, ambassador to the UN.

Robin Lorimer

Independent inspiration

ROBIN Lorimer, who has died aged 77, was a pioneer of the survival of an independent publishing industry in Scotland. His career bridged the traditional companies still based in Scotland at the end of the second world war and the independent houses founded, partly through his work and inspiration, during the 1970s.

An outspoken and occasionally truculent employee, Lorimer's difficulties with his superiors inevitably increased when, in the 1960s, Oliver & Boyd became part of the Pearson empire and was merged with Longman. In 1969 he left and launched his own imprint, Southside, with the publication of his friend Sydney Goodsir Smith's *Fifteen Poems and a Play*.



Robin Lorimer... contributions to the studies of Scottish language and literature

standards and to promote the publications of a number of fledgling companies. By now he was largely free, despite two serious illnesses, to concentrate on his own favoured projects, foremost among them the completion of his father's translation of the *New Testament* into Scots.

He was a great eccentric. His appearance, often kilted, went beyond the merely scruffy

Lorimer also made distinguished contributions to the studies of Scottish language and literature, and of pre-18th-century Highland bagpipe music (*òran-mòr* or *piobrach*). He also took an active interest in the work of the Scottish National Dictionary Association, of which he was a council member and vice-president. In 1982 he was elected an honorary fellow of the school of Scottish studies at the University of Edinburgh. During his happy retirement with Priscilla on Loch Tummel, he successfully translated *Macbeth* into literary Scots.

Lorimer was a man of strongly-held convictions whose uncompromising nature inevitably involved sacrifices for himself and his family, from whom he received strong support. He had a great gift for conversation and friendship, and was a kind, patient and utterly uncondemning mentor both to writers and younger colleagues. He was a marvellous companion on hill-walks in the Scottish Borders. He was also undoubtedly a

Dai Houying

Writer who emerged from the abyss

THE writer Dai Houying, who was found knifed to death in her Shanghai apartment at the age of 58, belonged to the new generation of Chinese women writers who found their voices in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76).



Dai Houying... denounced

Their theme was the stultifying mixture of gender and political oppression under the Maoist bureaucracy, and their own personal journeys of liberation away from it. Dai's experience stands out among many tragic and devastating tales.

"I was the first woman in my family to have an education..." Dai wrote in a postscript to her novel *Humanity*. "My heart brimmed over with warmth and love (for socialism)." Only after Mao died did she realise that she had been "robbed of the right to think." Now she would write "of the spark of light that shines in the abyss of darkness... of humanity."

Dai was born in a small town in the central province of Anhui. Her family were in petty commerce and vulnerable to criticism for "rightism" — an uncle committed suicide after false accusations of theft. Dai struggled to reach university, becoming a member of literature in Shanghai and married to a son of a Chinese official at the time — a childhood friend.

The publication of *Humanity*, published in English in 1986 under the title *Stones of the Wall*, coincided with a counter-offensive by Communist Party dogmatists against reform-minded cultural officials, scholars, and journalists who sought to forward the frontiers of creative freedom. Dai was condemned not only for her ideas but for "loose morals."

The dogmatists were defeated by ridicule, and Dai went on to write two more novels before the cultural freeze of the late 1980s, which culminated in the tragedy of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Dai was criticised for supporting the student protesters but this time was not publicly denounced. She continued teaching at Fudan University but, like many other disillusioned writers, produced much less. Perhaps she also found herself out of tune with the new entrepreneurial spirit of the 1990s.

Face to Faith

Country torn between the mosque and the miniskirt

HIS FACE appeared on the early evening news just as the call for evening prayer blared out from the mosque across the road, and the moment carried with it a strange sense of irony.

"Make the most of it," said my friend Mehmet holding aloft a glass of beer in one hand and a cigarette in another. "It could be our last bit of alcohol for a long time. Who knows what this guy's going to get up to."

The "guy" on the evening news was Necmettin Erbakan, who had that balmy afternoon, as we lazed on in Istanbul sipping chilled beer, been installed as prime minister of Turkey. His Islamist Refah party had just become the senior partner in a coalition with the centre-right Truth Party. Perfect timing one might think, for the pro-Islamist Erbakan to appear on national television just as the

Barely a mile away in one of Refah's strongholds and all the women are wearing veils. "People don't seem to understand our type of Islam. We have room for everyone in this country," he said proudly.

But the question many families like Mehmet's are asking themselves is how long? His sister Nefi, a qualified doctor, says she is proud of being a Muslim but is concerned at the emergence of Refah. She drinks and has never worn a veil — not because she is opposed to it on religious grounds but because, "I don't like it." Like her father, she fasts and observes all Muslim festivals.

Weekend Birthdays

Journo who keep their appointments with Michael Frayn, 63 tomorrow, return with smooth narratives of wry angst and discreet success through novels and plays. Except that in the details, this surreal gawk emerges. The iron-rim specs. The enormous hands spread in Romanesque gestures, as if he were starting in the Bayeux Tapestry, "I don't like having sticky fingers," he said, explaining his exit for a quick surgical scrub after each separate olive he ate from a bowl during an interview. Then there's the hope, the intimacy and the height: "Doors have often been a problem." Also the non-connection with the world's standard operating procedures; "He once tried to order lobster with endives in a Manchester slum pub," said his news editor on the Guardian, and his lady, Claire Tomalin, says that life with him means "running in an evening dress in the rain". There's the boldness — when he ran out of celebrities for his column, he invented them, the journalistic equivalent of stand-up comedy; his translations of Chekhov reclaimed the comedy in the plays — about awkward sods sitting around Russian estates not getting it, getting it on, or getting on



with it. This is the loon who celebrated disorder in the play *Alphabetical Order*, and predicted Internally Living in the novel *A Very Private Life*. Bet he's wild at heart.

Tomorrow's other birthdays: Jeanette Altwegg, ice skater, 68; Mike Aaronson, director-general, Save the Children, 48; Frankie Avalon, singer, 58; Prof Sir Derek Barton, organic chemist, 78; Graham Bradbury, jockey, 38; Ian Davidson, Labour MP, 47; Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, composer, 68; Bruce Yardley, cricketer, 49.

What could... sands.

Office World

A tartan U-turn

And the sooner the better

IN POLITICS as in business there are times to cut your losses. Such a moment has arrived for the Labour Party in Scotland. Its plan to hold not one but two referendums on devolution got more laughs than any stand-up comic on the Edinburgh Fringe; but it was laughter of the wrong sort, laced with justifiable derision. If Labour fell into so disastrous a muddle in opposition, people asked, what on earth would it do in government? In Glasgow this week the Prime Minister had sport with what he called a "steepiechase" of stupidity and the Nationalists were able to contrast the simplicity of their message of independence in Europe with the now ludicrously extensive set of fences over which a Home rule Bill, until recently simply dependent on a Labour electoral victory, would be made to jump. More ominously, the SNP are moving up in the opinion polls and are four points short of their historic high point — the second election of 1974 when they took 33 per cent of the vote in Scotland and 11 seats.

Labour's support for devolution has always contained a large element of pragmatism: above all it is designed to stop the Nationalists in the old industrial heartlands. But home rule within the Union is not a simple concept: were it so, then one of the many devolutionary proposals brought before Westminster since the 1880s would by now have succeeded. The devolution quagmire of the seventies ultimately led to the defeat of the Callaghan Government, and Mr Blair will be well aware of its perils. It would be a bitter irony were his progress in middle England and the City boardrooms threatened by a sudden collapse in the Scottish bedrock.

Had shadow Scottish Secretary George Robertson simply faced down the criticism that greeted the announcement of the first referendum, the disillusion felt by Labour's partners in the Scottish Constitutional Convention would have been manageable. It is hard to dispute the principle that an important constitutional change should receive direct popular endorsement. Mr Robertson was rattled in the first place by Tory attacks on the "tartan tax" which the Government asserts will flow from a tax-raising Scottish parliament and in the second by recriminations about a diluted commitment from within the broad devolutionary camp and the nationalist wing of his own party. The result was the curious fudge of a second referendum. Devolution may be designed to head off nationalist sentiment, but there are better reasons why Parliament should support it. A Scottish parliament will not only give Scotland a chance to express its distinctive values within the Union, but will address a real democratic deficit in Scotland, ruled by an oligarchy of quangos loaded with government sympathisers. The powerful Labour regions have been dismembered in a reform of local government imposed without consultation in the most squalid traditions of gerrymandering. Scottish devolution is a trail-blazer for more general constitutional change. The most immediate consequence is that the number of Scottish MPs at Westminster will have to be reconsidered, as will the place of the Scottish Secretary in the Cabinet. Labour's acceptance of proportional representation for a Scottish parliament makes it harder for it to resist its application at UK level, and the principle that decision-making should be brought near to the people it affects is ostensibly endorsed even by the Tory Europhobes.

If Labour's muddle in Scotland has been risible, the cynicism of the Tory tactics is scarcely less so. Scottish Secretary Michael Forsyth puts on the kilt for the premiere of Braveheart and persuades the Queen to return the Stone of Destiny to Scotland. He and the Prime Minister talk up nationalism, praising its clarity. This is a masquerade. Their real purpose is to split the opposition vote, and a small Tory recovery along with the SNP rise in the polls suggests that the tactic is having some slight success. Labour has given them further ammunition. It is now in the throes of ditching its commitment to a second referendum. It can't be discarded too quickly. Better a short-season of comedy than a long-running farce.

Blues see red

Chelsea's Trojan Horse

LABOUR'S strategists were quite right to be quietly gloating over yesterday's revelation that Matthew Harding the City financier and vice chairman of Chelsea Football Club had given the party £1 million. What was interesting was not just that it was a record individual donation to Labour of transfer fee proportions (and the second donation of £1 million in a week) but where it came from. Chelsea has hitherto been seen almost as a Tory fiefdom — run by Ken Bates, a Tory voter, and with John Major and David Mellor as its most prominent supporters (until Mr Major was persuaded last year to stay away after supporters barracked him believing he brought the team bad luck). Although no one has done a survey it is probable that Chelsea supporters contain a higher share of Tory-inclined voters than most other clubs.

Supporters may just that £1 million could have been used to buy another player (or at least a downpayment on one) but it is Mr Harding's own money and the way he chose to spend it couldn't have been more hurtful to Mr Major. The successful City businessman said bluntly he regarded Mr Blair's Labour Party as the true party of enterprise and added yesterday: "I really feel that what New Labour under Tony Blair's leadership is trying to do is the right thing at the right time. In America you can be fabulously wealthy and be a Democrat and nobody blinks an eyelid. As we come towards the millennium I think it's a great opportunity for the whole country to rethink how it is governed. Ouch. It was as if Vinny Jones announced he was becoming a Quaker.

Mr Harding has at least been practising what he preaches by sinking his own savings into improvements in Stamford Bridge's infrastructure which, together with Football Trust money and the construction of a hotel, will produce a kind of Keynesian regeneration. If the rest of industry had followed Chelsea's example, the recovery of the economy would have been much more robust. Of course, part of Chelsea's revival is down to the traditional British vice of buying imports (manager Ruud Gullit and sundry European stars). But they are class players who have boosted the image of a club renowned for its rough edges. In this sense Chelsea may be a metaphor for the Labour Party as it moves itself subtly upmarket.

Letters to the Editor

Battle joined over Iraq

VISITED Iraq last April as a member of the Centre for Economic and Social Rights team to which Maggie O'Kane refers (Burden falls on the sick and the hungry, September 5), investigating the impact of sanctions on health services. What I witnessed is a human tragedy. Hospitals which were once regional referral centres lack the most basic equipment, including oxygen, anaesthetic agents and foetal monitors. Operations are being performed literally in the dark, because light bulbs can no longer be imported. The primary health-care system has collapsed, along with water and sanitation provision. Untreated sewage is contaminating drinking water, causing major outbreaks of life-threatening diseases such as typhoid and dysentery.

Reliable estimates from the World Health Organisation suggest that half a million children have died as a direct result of sanctions — one every six minutes. At Ibn-al-Baladi hospital in Baghdad I witnessed the death of eight-month-old Ali Hassan from diarrhoea. His life could have been saved with simple antibiotics. I also witnessed the grief of his mother. Like many of us, she could not understand why her child had been punished for the actions of the Iraqi government. Jean Leacock, Health Development Information Project, Ramallah, West Bank.

WHAT is needed is an unequivocal policy towards Iraq in which both they and Saddam know where the US stands. The knee-jerk reaction of Bob Dole, advocating the rejection of "986", the oil-food resolution, is fundamentally misconceived. Resolution 986, under the supervision of some 200 UN monitors, will bring food and medicine to the four million Iraqis, including Kurds, who are destitute. These are the people we need to be supporting if we genuinely wish to see an end to Saddam. Clive Furness, Cmpn Against Repression & for Democratic Rights in Iraq, P O Box 210, London N16 6PL.

READING the letters (September 5) condemning the US raids on Iraq makes me wonder whether the world has learned anything from the history of the last 60 years.

I doubt whether any of these moaning minnies were even alive when Hitler, with the general approval of the West, marched into Austria in 1938 where he was received with open arms, just as Saddam was received by one faction of the Kurds.

Had the world in 1936 and 1938 thought less of legal niceties and more of stopping Hitler in his tracks, the calamities of the second world war and the Holocaust might have been avoided. Full marks to the Americans. Henry Mortimer, 140 Carisbrooke Road, Leicester LE3 3PE.

LET'S see. That's 34 Tomahawk cruise missiles so far at a million dollars each, and still no sign of Saddam quitting.

Surely a greater de-stabilising effect (with fewer casualties) would be achievable by air-dropping \$44,000,000 cash over Baghdad or the Republican Guard's barracks? Arthur Wardell, 7 Clarendon Road, Southtown, Halifax HX3 6NX.

US lackey

PETER Preston (No fatted calf for the prodigal Unesco, September 6) lucidly shows how the United Kingdom is prepared to follow in the footsteps of the United States.

In refusing to return to Unesco membership, it denies UK scientists, educators and those working in the fields of culture and communication fully to participate in valuable Unesco initiatives. Initiatives that Douglas Hogg and his successors have acknowledged to be of such value that could the government only afford the \$11 million, it would return immediately.

So, Mr Major, what are the reasons for the delay? Can it be true that Malcolm Rifkind is more keen to listen to the US isolationists than to Unesco's 186 member states? (Dr Maurice Goldsmith, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL.

How trade unions can work to mutual advantage

AS A retired senior trade union official I welcomed Geoff Mulgan's call (Union future in mutual satisfaction, September 3) for trade unions to reconsider their role in the radically changed labour market of the 1990s.

However, I fear that trade unions are, by and large, culturally and structurally incapable of any such radical action. Only John Monks, general secretary of the TUC, seems to have understood the problem.

The culture of the large unions is one of chauvinism, captured by the practical need of recruiting new members in a fiercely competitive world, of the need to "rubbish" competitor unions, and for the union's lay executive need to demonstrate one-upmanship to members.

This chauvinism leads to tunnel vision, so that no one is prepared to plan over a longer period than six weeks, or whenever the national executive next meets. The TUC is denied the powers and resources to bring

trade unions into the 1990s by the major unions, which are determined to retain their autonomy. Some ideas needing urgent consideration are: 24-hour telephone advice lines on pensions, benefits, debt and other management "surgeries" in major supermarkets; more TV advertising; and promotion of credit unions as an alternative to the greedier banks. John Dempsey, Sandhurst Avenue, Lytham St Annes, Lancs FY8.

Geoff Mulgan would have us all join an "employee mutual" which would be charged with "organising, managing and selling labour on behalf of its members". He then goes on to describe it as "a hybrid of existing types of organisation". You bet it is. It appears to be a combination of the worst types of employment agencies which are currently "selling" labour to firms in order that the latter may dispense with the awkward business of training, social-security contributions and employment law.

Mr Mulgan bases this scenario on the falling rate of union membership. Has it not occurred to him that one of the reasons for this is the Tory industrial legislation which has made trade unions virtually powerless and, therefore, hardly worth joining? Walter Cairns, 836 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M20 8RP.

FOR all of Geoff Mulgan's ideas to become reality it must be remembered that there is no right of representation or recognition in Britain. This has been the major factor in inhibiting the role and development of trade unions. There is an immediate need for a labour code which establishes the international standards and legal obligations of freedom of association and collective bargaining. John C Foster, General Secretary, NUJ, 314-320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP.

us, she could not understand why her child had been punished for the actions of the Iraqi government. Jean Leacock, Health Development Information Project, Ramallah, West Bank.

WHAT is needed is an unequivocal policy towards Iraq in which both they and Saddam know where the US stands. The knee-jerk reaction of Bob Dole, advocating the rejection of "986", the oil-food resolution, is fundamentally misconceived. Resolution 986, under the supervision of some 200 UN monitors, will bring food and medicine to the four million Iraqis, including Kurds, who are destitute. These are the people we need to be supporting if we genuinely wish to see an end to Saddam. Clive Furness, Cmpn Against Repression & for Democratic Rights in Iraq, P O Box 210, London N16 6PL.

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I doubt whether any of these moaning minnies were even alive when Hitler, with the general approval of the West, marched into Austria in 1938 where he was received with open arms, just as Saddam was received by one faction of the Kurds.

Had the world in 1936 and 1938 thought less of legal niceties and more of stopping Hitler in his tracks, the calamities of the second world war and the Holocaust might have been avoided. Full marks to the Americans. Henry Mortimer, 140 Carisbrooke Road, Leicester LE3 3PE.

LET'S see. That's 34 Tomahawk cruise missiles so far at a million dollars each, and still no sign of Saddam quitting.

Surely a greater de-stabilising effect (with fewer casualties) would be achievable by air-dropping \$44,000,000 cash over Baghdad or the Republican Guard's barracks? Arthur Wardell, 7 Clarendon Road, Southtown, Halifax HX3 6NX.

US lackey

PETER Preston (No fatted calf for the prodigal Unesco, September 6) lucidly shows how the United Kingdom is prepared to follow in the footsteps of the United States.

In refusing to return to Unesco membership, it denies UK scientists, educators and those working in the fields of culture and communication fully to participate in valuable Unesco initiatives. Initiatives that Douglas Hogg and his successors have acknowledged to be of such value that could the government only afford the \$11 million, it would return immediately.

So, Mr Major, what are the reasons for the delay? Can it be true that Malcolm Rifkind is more keen to listen to the US isolationists than to Unesco's 186 member states? (Dr Maurice Goldsmith, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL.

How trade unions can work to mutual advantage

AS A retired senior trade union official I welcomed Geoff Mulgan's call (Union future in mutual satisfaction, September 3) for trade unions to reconsider their role in the radically changed labour market of the 1990s.

However, I fear that trade unions are, by and large, culturally and structurally incapable of any such radical action. Only John Monks, general secretary of the TUC, seems to have understood the problem.

The culture of the large unions is one of chauvinism, captured by the practical need of recruiting new members in a fiercely competitive world, of the need to "rubbish" competitor unions, and for the union's lay executive need to demonstrate one-upmanship to members.

This chauvinism leads to tunnel vision, so that no one is prepared to plan over a longer period than six weeks, or whenever the national executive next meets. The TUC is denied the powers and resources to bring

trade unions into the 1990s by the major unions, which are determined to retain their autonomy. Some ideas needing urgent consideration are: 24-hour telephone advice lines on pensions, benefits, debt and other management "surgeries" in major supermarkets; more TV advertising; and promotion of credit unions as an alternative to the greedier banks. John Dempsey, Sandhurst Avenue, Lytham St Annes, Lancs FY8.

Geoff Mulgan would have us all join an "employee mutual" which would be charged with "organising, managing and selling labour on behalf of its members". He then goes on to describe it as "a hybrid of existing types of organisation". You bet it is. It appears to be a combination of the worst types of employment agencies which are currently "selling" labour to firms in order that the latter may dispense with the awkward business of training, social-security contributions and employment law.

Mr Mulgan bases this scenario on the falling rate of union membership. Has it not occurred to him that one of the reasons for this is the Tory industrial legislation which has made trade unions virtually powerless and, therefore, hardly worth joining? Walter Cairns, 836 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M20 8RP.

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Helping the poor but not the rich

OUR tax proposals will indeed help the low-paid (Leader, September 6). Our long-term objective is to have a new, lower starting rate of tax of 10p, or preferably 10p, in the pound, so as to help people off benefit and into rewarding work. Our proposals stand in contrast to the Conservatives' objective of abolishing Capital Gains Tax and Inheritance Tax: half the benefit of which will go to some of the richest 5,000 people in Britain.

Whilst our proposals would benefit all taxpayers, they would in particular help the low-paid move up the employment ladder by reducing marginal rates of tax for those on low earnings and therefore provide an incentive to get into work.

Our proposals have a significant advantage over alternative proposals to raise personal allowances. Raising these allowances helps higher-rate taxpayers more than lower- and middle-income families. For example, a blanket rise in allowances gives double the benefit to 40 per cent taxpayers as compared with those paying the 20 per cent marginal rate. Furthermore, increasing allowances does little to reduce the very high marginal tax rates facing the low paid. Alistair Darling MP, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

LABOUR's windfall tax has more disadvantages than you have listed (Tories dig in on tax, September 6). The windfall tax can only be justified by the claim that the utility companies have been ripping off the consumer. This must mean either that they have invested too little, or that they have charged the consumer too much.

Giving the money to the Treasury will not put this right. The windfall tax must be paid for either in excessive charges to the consumer, or in continuing pollution in the drinking water and continuing sewage on the beaches. There is no such thing as a free tax. Moreover, Labour proposes to use the windfall tax to meet continuing spend-

ing commitments. Rising tax yields from growth would take some time to come on stream. So utility companies, in setting the level of charges to the consumer, would be effectively setting the level of taxation. This means that the tax is a proposal to privatise control of taxation. The constitutional implications of that proposal need some thought. Malcolm Bruce MP, Treasury Spokesperson, Liberal Democrats, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

LABOUR has to be very careful if it wishes to advocate a more progressive income-tax policy. The Tories' Labour Tax Bombshell campaign was very effective in 1992. You are quite right to argue for raising tax allowances, adjusting higher-rate thresholds and increasing the top rate (currently 40 per cent). However, the Conservatives would again use this to scare floating voters unless Labour published detailed figures saying exactly what effect this will have on people's incomes. Low earners need to be able to see clearly that they will be better off, and all but, say, the top 20 per cent need to see that they will be no worse off. One problem for Labour is that people tend to be more optimistic about their own financial prospects than they are about the nation in general. Therefore individuals are concerned about taxation on incomes slightly higher than their own. Richard Mountford, 76 Springfield Road, Birmingham B14 7DY.

In his search for Labour tax cuts, John Major should take a trip down to Brighton and Hove. Labour-run Brighton Council has cut its share of council tax for three years, running. Year after year Brighton residents have paid the lowest council tax in East Sussex whilst enjoying the biggest range of services. This year we cut our share of the tax bill by one third — the country's biggest drop. (Cler) Steve Bassam, Brighton Labour Council, 25 Church Place, Brighton BN2 5JN.

A Country Diary

NORTH PEMBROKESHIRE: A month ago I had the pleasure of a Field Studies course at Orleton, South Pembrokeshire, devoted to dragonflies.

In this rich dragonfly country we met members of half the species to be found in the country as a whole. This achievement was thanks to leadership, high levels of group enthusiasm and remarkable visual acuity — spotting an unusual larva case on the edge of a large reedy pond is a good example of that. Once under the microscope it declared itself to be a Migrant Hawflies, the first time it had been found breeding as far north as Dower Common. Such discoveries may seem slight, but here we were, adding to the sum of entomological knowledge. That day the sun shone, the insects flew. Another day it rained. Mist lay on the hills. Did this deter our captives? Not a whit. Off we set in the Preseli Hills. They were lying low in reeds and grass beside their favoured slow-flowing

haglands. Squelch, squelch. Another sunny day, we investigated National Trust limestone areas, enjoying the plants, like the bristling Viper's bugloss, butterflies and their caterpillars — thistles being chewed by the solitary dark worms of the Painted Lady. New minnows, the flying form is now all around. We watched greater horsehoe bats sailing through the dusk making little pipistrelles seem even smaller. On Dower Common we had tiny frogs scrambling over our boots holding our attention whilst horseflies turned us into swollen wrecks with their painful bites. We picked up some dead specimens. Looking at a dragonfly's eyes through a microscope is thrilling. They may have up to 30,000 facets which appear like minute lenses. Now floods and gales turn the joys of summer into the pleasures of memory, but Orleton remains. Contact FSC Preston Mountford, Shrewsbury SY4 8HW and have fun. AIDREY INVSCH

Bad hair campaign doesn't have a prayer



Mark Lawson

THE attempt to rediscover lost youth is generally a sad spectacle. This is certainly the case with individuals — the long hair and jeans in middle age, the sudden interest in new rock bands, the trophy wife — but also with institutions. Here the process is more liberal — seeking to bring back lost youths to the fold — but even more queasy.

The venerable newspaper with its strenuously irrelevant teenage magazine, the ancient bank with its bribes of CDs and concert tickets to new depositors. And now, this week, the Christian churches of Britain with their latest advertising campaign.

In lurid purple, green and orange, the posters show three cartoon monarchs above the copyline: "Bad Hair Day!! You're a virgin, you've just given birth and now three kings have shown up." In much smaller, white type, the bottom line invites the viewer

to "Find out the happy ending at a church near you." The phrase "bad hair day" derived from the male experience of mornings when the coiffure mysteriously subverts the money spent on it. The trichologist Philip Kingsley claims to have coined it as early as the 1950s, but in recent years it emerged among teenagers on the American west coast to refer to a day of general mishaps and unhappiness. It still awaits listing in the Oxford English Dictionary but is preserved in that populist receptacle of streetwise lexicography: the 1995 American movie Clueless.

The use of this expression by the Churches Advertising Network, the marketing arm of English protestantism, has given many in the C of E a bad hair day. The Archbishop of York, Dr David Hope, has reportedly complained to his superior at Canterbury. This is not surprising for church conservatives have in the last decade selected two territories for their struggle against the liberals: gender and language. In the latter area, already forced to surrender the authorised version and the book of common prayer, they have grimly awaited the day when they turn up for Sunday service to hear a reading from the gospel containing the words: "Right, then, that's like, sorted," said Jesus." For the current advertising

campaign is playing John the Baptist to suit a state-wide baby boom. But the sensible objection to this phrase's strange journey from trichology to theology is not that it might hurt but that it won't work. The campaign is not witty or apt — the only real bad hair day in scripture was Samson's — and it shows no attempt to address the concerns of those it hopes to reach. It is no coincidence that religion exercises most hold in the early and the late stages of life. Young children warm to the Christmas story, because its central element — an infant with special powers — is both recognisable from their experience and appealing to their egos. The ageing respond because the churches address the question of death. To those in their second decade, however, organised religion represents restriction and moderation at a time when their intellects and hormones are interested in liberty and excess.

How relevant will the church campaign seem to the young? They are asked to contemplate the horror of being a pregnant virgin with three Prince Charles-type guys hanging round their house. Apart from the fact that the poster seems directed only at female teenagers, this scenario sounds tedious rather than frightening. A Stephen King spin on scripture might have been more promising: "You're a virgin. You're about to give birth to a baby boy. And the state wants him dead." But the real difficulty is the "happy ending" that the advert promises to those whom the poster lures to a service. In Christian terms, the "happy ending" is eternal life, but, as rock music and suicide demonstrate, the young are half in love with the idea of early death.

By coincidence, this week also saw a promotional push aimed at the young which was clever and effective, so much

are on us this Sunday" but to argue that the whole point of commercialism is that it must appeal to the desires or prejudices of the targeted consumers. Being efficiently cynical is what business is about. The churches are being cynically inefficient.

Interestingly, another church is about to launch an advertising campaign. Following the April decision by the Independent Television Commission to permit it to proselytise on the airwaves, the Church of Scientology will shortly begin to chase souls on the cable channel, UK Gold. Now the scientologists may be a shadowy outfit of brainwashing weirdos but they know all about securing youthful followers: witness their long history of targeting disillusioned students in high streets with those "personality tests" designed to confirm that the applicants don't have one. Accordingly, their own grab at makes an interesting comparison with the Anglican one.

The scientology commercial makes no concessions at all to shifts of fashion in language or broadcasting. Visually, it most resembles Coca-Cola advertisements of the early seventies: a parade of shiny hopeful young faces speaks the single word "Trust", initially in English and then in major international languages. The piece ends with the young people

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Give room

Martin Woollace

D

Richard Mountford

Birmingham B14 7DY

John Major should take a trip down to Brighton and Hove

Labour-run Brighton Council has cut its share of council tax for three years, running

Year after year Brighton residents have paid the lowest council tax in East Sussex

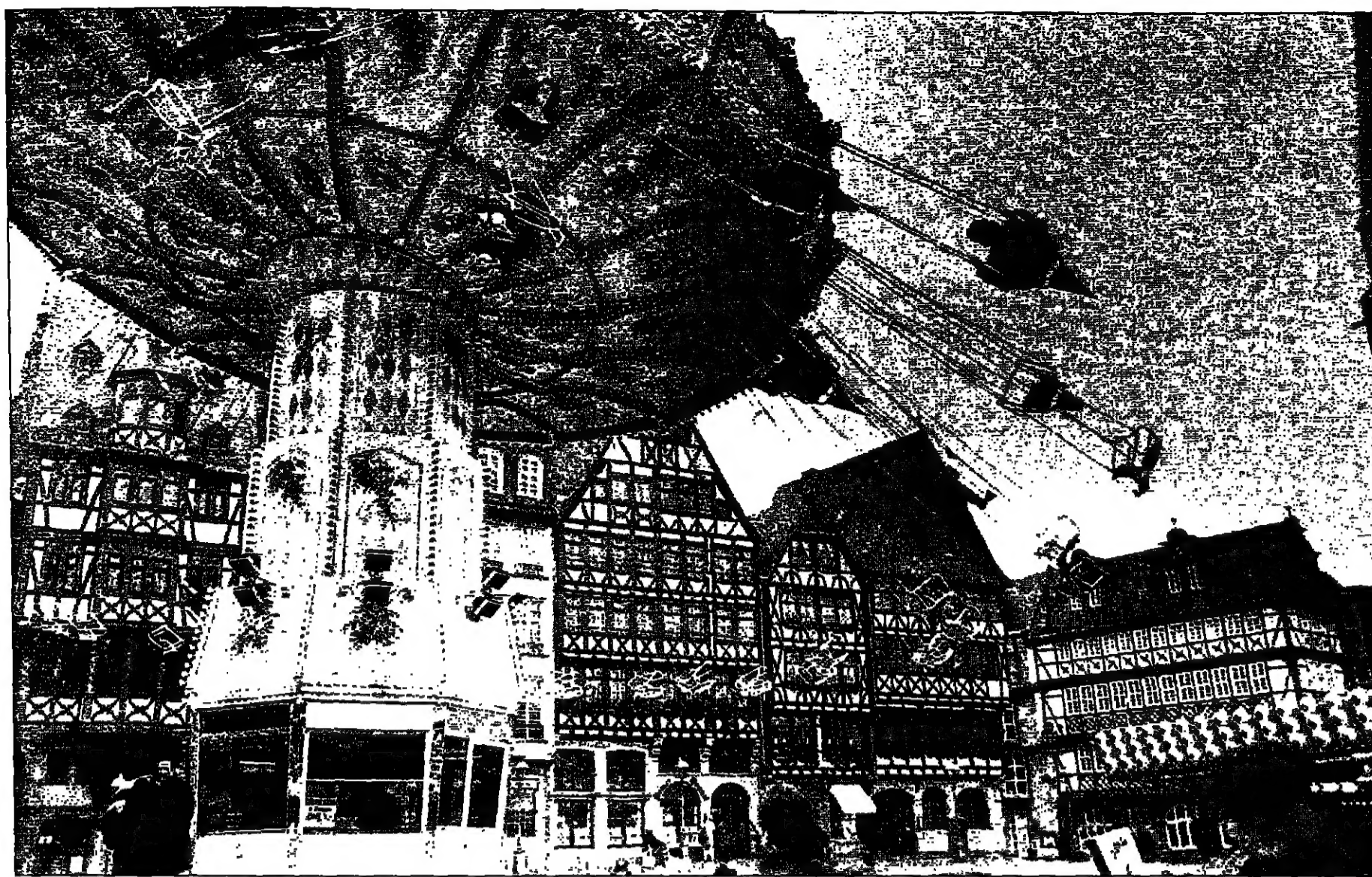
whilst enjoying the biggest range of services

This year we cut our share of the tax bill by one third — the country's biggest drop

the flying form is now all around

We watched greater horsehoe bats sailing through the dusk

The benefits of Germany's social market system are being eroded by adverse conditions. Yet all is not lost, argues Mark Milner



Swings and roundabouts... The chill winds of German economic change are sweeping through old Frankfurt's Römerberg and city shopping malls

PHOTOGRAPH: DENIS THORPE

A timely global warning

FOUR million people out of work, poor growth and a gap between inward and external investment that would do credit to the Grand Canyon. Is the post-war model that has served the German economy so well for half a century finally on the wane?

Wolfgang Streeck, at the Cologne-based Max-Planck Institute, described German capitalism in a recent paper as "governed by nationally specific social institutions that made for high international competitiveness at high wages and, at the same time, low inequality of incomes and living standards".

Some of the problems which now confront the German social market economy can be put down, at least partially, to cyclical factors. But others cannot simply await the next swing of the pendulum. Bosses grumble about company costs — not wages, but the add-ons needed to support a generous social security system. This

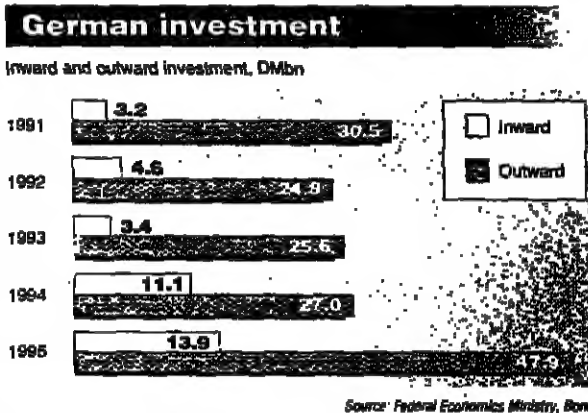
week, the chemical industry employers' association revealed that they almost equal wage costs — though they are generally at around 80 per cent.

They also complain about the labour market's inflexibility, citing the battle to reform a system of retail hours which made it difficult for workers to reach the shops — Saturday mornings excepted — before they close.

But employers have their problems, too. Germany's highly-regulated pay bargaining or employers' associations negotiate deals with the unions which must then be implemented across the industry — is under pressure.

Employers' association members are threatening to quit or are actually testing because they say they cannot afford blanket deals. Can a pay deal which suits Germany's big three chemical companies, BASF, Bayer and Hoechst, be right for the country's myriad smaller companies — or vice versa?

In some sectors — chemicals, printing and textiles —



flexible pay deals are being drawn up with minimum terms which can be topped up (or not) in line with local circumstances. Such flexibility could be essential. If enough employers desert their associations the centralised system of bargaining will break down, with wide ranging implications. Centralised bargaining has prevented low-wage competition — which has forced companies to compete on quality, rather than price.

Germany's collective bargaining system has been cited as largely responsible for the low wage differentials between individuals, industrial sectors, and small and large firms.

And for Germany, globalisation of markets matters more than most, as in the early 1990s, Germany's share per head of the population of the world's visible trade was well ahead of Japan and the US — making it that much more dependent on and influenced by the international trade environment.

The same may be said of the globalisation of capital flows. In Germany's case that has seen a pick-up in both inward and outward investment, but with the latter far outstripping the former.

Here again, Germany's high labour costs and inflexible labour market get the blame. Such worries are apparently more than enough to offset Germany's position as the biggest (and richest) market in the European Community, as well as a geographically strategic base for expansion into the developing markets of central and eastern Europe.

The impact is significant. Heinrich von Pierer, the chief executive of Siemens, argued recently that the investment flow deficit was the equivalent of more than 300,000 jobs

— enough to make a tidy dent in the current four million jobsless total. Yet all this comes at a time when German companies are, for a variety of reasons (including a more market-based approach to relations between companies and the banking sector) looking increasingly towards the international investment community for funds.

This has drawn attention to the relatively (by comparative international standards) poor profits performance of corporate Germany.

That has sparked a debate about "shareholder value" at a time when others who may have a greater understanding of the concept have also begun to talk about it. Critics are sceptical about how deeply corporate Germany has embraced this issue.

THIS week, the Financial Times' Lex Column suggested: "The problem is that while almost all German public companies now claim to espouse shareholder value, most have nothing more in mind than keeping their investors supplied with information and, hopefully, dividends."

Others, like Dr Jürgen Pfister, head of economic research at Commerzbank, reckons there are sharp spurs driving German companies further down this road: "It is now a broadly based development across the business community. Pressure from international investors is an important element."

Companies which need capital to expand are going to international markets and need to accept the accompanying disciplines — including returns unacceptably low on investment.

As if that was not enough, Germany faces problems rais-

ing capital for start-up businesses. Senior banking sources accept that the German system is not at its best when it comes to finding venture capital. Banks prefer to make loans on the basis of tangible collateral, rather than good ideas.

Companies, too, are a little cautious when it comes to embracing new ideas. According to Dr Hans-Joachim Hass, the director general of economic policy at the Federation of German Industries (BDI): "There are certain areas of industry, like automobiles, for example, where (German) export performance is quite good and where the competitiveness of German companies is quite good. But in some of the newer industries and service-oriented areas like software, in general German companies do not play on the world market."

Will Germany, or the German model be able to cope? Economic growth will help. So would some easing of the costs of unification, though that burden shows little sign of being lightened.

But can Germany become more flexible and less regulated (read less expensive and, perhaps, less egalitarian) to cope with the pressures of globalisation? The general answer is that Germany can change — though solutions are unlikely to appear overnight. Indeed the debate may well lose some of its urgency if and when the expected upturn in the economy in the second half of this year — and, more dramatically, next year — finally materialises.

But Germany's model is more than an economic one. Public interest, either through the direct intervention of government or through the pay-bargaining system — is an integral part. That is partly why — whatever its successes with other products — Germany has not managed to export its system.

According to Mr Streeck: "Globalisation discriminates against modes of economic governance that require public intervention... it favours national systems like those in the United States and Britain that historically relied less on public-political and more on private-contractual economic governance."

In other words, there is more at stake than return on investment and shareholder value.

German Capitalism: Does it exist? Can it survive? Wolfgang Streeck, Max Planck Institute, Cologne

Borrowed time runs out for three of Italy's buccaneers

Aristocrat achieves graceful exit but not so the politician, the engineer or the farmer, says John Glover in Milan

IN THE booming eighties, Il Contadino, Il Cavaliere, l'Ingegnere and l'Avvocato, respectively three outsiders and the ultimate insider, were the public faces of Italian business.

In the tougher nineties, the business scene seems to be dominated by accountants and management consultants, with many a nickname in sight. The boardroom coup at Olivetti which this week ousted l'Ingegnere (Carlo de Benedetti) was orchestrated by the number-crunchers and their backers at investing institutions abroad.

During the eighties, the patrician manners of Avvocato Gianni Agnelli, ultimate insider and boss of Fiat, brought him the title of uncrowned king of Italy as he sold millions of Unos to car buyers across the Continent. Il Contadino, "the farmer", had an altogether earlier approach. But that did not stop Raul Gardini throwing together an agribusiness and chemicals empire (Ferruzzi/Montedison) that stretched across southern Europe and into the Americas.

Silvio Berlusconi, who boasts the title of "Cavaliere del Lavoro" as head of Fininvest, smashed Italy's stultic state TV monopoly and set off into France and Spain with hopes of doing something similar abroad.

Meanwhile, engineer Mr de Benedetti swifly moved Olivetti, the typewriter and office equipment firm he rescued from near-bankruptcy, into the new — and then lucrative — era of personal computing.

With this week's addio from l'Ingegnere, all four have now left the business scene. However, the differences in the manner of their exits are revealing. The outsiders, buccaneering capitalists all — though sadly short of capital — have been forced to retreat. But the insider, even though no more able than his rivals to finance the growth of a multinational company, is unscathed.

The problems Fiat faced are the same as those that laid low the three newcomers — tough markets, shrinking margins, cash calls to pay off debt and a garnishing of corruption cases.

Il Contadino committed

suicide as debts and evidence of political bribery piled up. Il Cavaliere, who went into politics in a last-ditch — but successful — attempt to salvage his indebted empire, now finds himself a professional politician and full-time defendant in numerous corruption cases.

l'Ingegnere made his name preaching — though not always practising — the virtues of doing business on the open market, as opposed to the traditional and more discreet bank dining rooms. Like his peers, he has his problems with inquisitive magistrates.

Meanwhile, l'Avvocato has moved quietly upstairs. Resigning as chairman of Fiat, the aristocratic Mr Agnelli has retained his position as chairman of IFIL, the most important of the holding companies through which his family owns Fiat. These four faces of Italian business have a common element — Mediobanca, the secretive and powerful Milan investment bank headed by 89-year-old Enrico Cuccia, "il Diavolo" (the devil). The bank holds small, key stakes in three of the four empires. Commercial banks in its orbit were — and are — big lenders to all of them and set the line for other lenders.

Il Contadino's empire teetered on the edge of collapse when Mediobanca withdrew its support. Il Cavaliere listed the most appetising parts of his empire to repay loans from banks close to Mediobanca. On Monday, the day before his was followed by Mr Cuccia, who persuaded the bank that the only way to avoid a meltdown was to remove Mr De Benedetti, sources say.

For l'Avvocato, though, it was all different. He got the money he needed to set Fiat on the road to revival after Mediobanca in 1993 led Italy's largest capital increase for a company. A couple of years later he was able to call in his debt — without having to come up with a lira of his own money.

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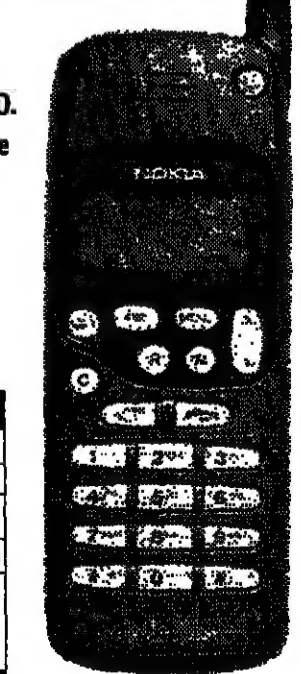
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July, 1996



Mike Kinski, new Southern Water chief executive, inspects the three-mile stormwater tunnel which will prevent sewage overflow onto Brighton beach. PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER SAMBER

Notebook

Frankfurt cannot claim infallibility



Edited by Alex Brummer

DEUTSCHE Bank has behaved impeccably in standing behind the three prominent Morgan Grenfell investment funds and making good the £180 million hole left behind by some over-enthusiastic young traders: a familiar story. Moreover, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell's ultimate boss, chief executive Michael Dobson, has been unusually frank to acknowledge a break-down of control and supervision — a strong contrast with Barings. It is perhaps too much to expect someone as senior as Mr Dobson to clear his desk that, judging by the Jürgen Schneider affair, is not the Deutsche Bank management's fund management operations under the supervision of headquarters in Frankfurt. Certainly, the City of London has had its regulatory problems. But in almost every case — Barings, Robert Fleming and now Morgan Grenfell — the difficulties were as much about the pressure which senior management/proponents put on their staff for performance and the staff incentives structure which encourage people to overreach. There is good reason to believe that the regulatory structures have improved and co-ordination is better between Imro and the Securities and Futures Authority since the bleak days of the Maxwell affair. Having decided to move all of its European investment banking operations to London — in keeping with US investment banks such as Morgan Stanley — it would be a retrograde step to move them back to Frankfurt.

Vickers' defence

SOME companies seem happy to act in defiance of new trends in corporate practice. Often they are defence companies. One of them is Vickers. This week the company let it be known that its chief executive, Sir Colin Chandler, was to take on the dual role of chairman and chief executive, despite the well known and generally accepted Cadbury recommendations that these jobs should be split. Were it not for an assurance that the arrangement will last only a year, some big shareholders might have been less happy to accept it. The move comes shortly after another engineering company with defence interests, GKN, finally broke its record of combining the jobs. British Aerospace flirted with the idea of bringing the top jobs together when it replaced its last chairman nearly three years ago, but did the sensible thing.

Tony rate cut route blocked

Consumer surge reaches factories

Mark Tran in New York and Larry Elliott

THE Conservatives' hopes of further pre-election interest rate cuts were all but snuffed out last night after a rebound in UK factory output and prospects of a tightening in American monetary policy convinced the City that borrowing costs had reached their trough. The recent upturn in British consumer spending at last addressed through to manufacturing production in July, with firms churning out 0.5 per cent more than in June, the Office for National Statistics said. Over the latest three months, manufacturing output was flat, but the ONS data confirmed reports from the CBI and purchasing managers that the decline in the first half of 1996 was over.

books improving, output is set to continue to rise in coming months. This supports our view that the time for rate cuts has passed. Chancellor Kenneth Clarke next meets Bank of England Governor Eddie George to discuss monetary policy on September 23, but analysts believe the scope for even a quarter-point cut is slim. With the authorities already keeping a wary eye on the property market, one City firm yesterday increased its forecast for house price inflation at the end of this year from 5 per cent to 7 per cent. Rob Thomas, housing analyst with UBS, said that by the fourth quarter of 1997 house prices would be increasing at an annual rate of 10 per cent. On the international scene,

the Federal Reserve was yesterday coming under increasing pressure to raise rates as the US unemployment rate plunged to its lowest level in seven years. The unemployment rate in August fell to 5.1 per cent from 5.4 per cent in July as the robust American economy created 250,000 new jobs. The latest economic numbers pointed to stronger-than-expected economic growth for the second half of the year, contrary to earlier Wall Street expectations. Wall Street analysts now expect the Fed's Open Market Committee to raise rates by at least 25 — and perhaps 50 — basis points when the central bank's policy-making body next meets, on September 24. Fed officials have been dropping heavy hints all

week of an imminent rate rise, giving the markets plenty of time to anticipate monetary tightening. Fed officials this week described the economy as "running hot" and entering an "inflation danger zone". Some analysts, such as David Jones of Aubrey Lustron, argue that the Fed has fallen behind the inflation curve and think it needs to move aggressively by boosting rates by 50 basis points. The Fed usually leaves rate alone in a presidential election year but, given the unabated vigour of the current economic expansion, Fed chairman Alan Greenspan faces little choice but to break with political tradition. Otherwise, the bond market will do the job for him. In a sign of wage inflation pressure, August's job num-

bers showed a six-cent increase in the closely watched average hourly earnings of non-farm workers, to \$11.87, following a two-cent drop in July. Manufacturing showed signs of life — after declines in June and July — as jobs in the factories sector rose by 70,000. The markets yesterday reacted without too much alarm to the unemployment report because it was in line with expectations. An interest rate rise has already been priced into the market after the recent retreat in the Dow Jones Industrial Average, which fell more than 100 points last week and 49 points on Thursday. In early afternoon trading yesterday, the Dow was up 41.43 at \$548.89.

Imro puts pressure on Deutsche in wrangle over compensation

Richard Milnes and Paul Murphy

A ROW over compensation brought fresh pain to the 90,000 investors caught in the three stricken funds run by Morgan Grenfell yesterday, with the beleaguered investment bank insisting it would make no firm commitments until an investigation into dealings by suspended fund manager Peter Young is complete. A redemption levels in the three European funds hit the £200 million mark. Morgan Grenfell said it had taken no decision on whether investors should be compensated for the 5 per cent fall in the funds' value following the resumption of trading on Thursday in the three funds which had been frozen for 72 hours.

ing the level of redemptions to 13 per cent since dealing resumed on Thursday. Independent financial advisers, who have been largely responsible for steering £1.4 billion from private investors into the European Growth Fund, the Europa Trust and the European Capital Growth Fund, yesterday called on Deutsche Bank to pledge that it will not undertake to buy out the three funds if investors concerned that almost 8 per cent of the biggest fund affected — the European Growth Trust — still rests in unquoted, illiquid stocks. Also, of the quoted remainder, a large portion of investors' cash rests in thinly

traded companies which the funds' new managers, Stuart Mitchell and Julian Johnston, would be able to dispose of only at a substantial discount. Mr Mitchell told financial advisers on Thursday that he planned to change up to a quarter of the European Growth Trust's assets "in the short term". But he added that this had to be "balanced against redemptions" from the fund. A spokesman for Morgan said yesterday that it was "too early to say" whether the bank's German parent — which has hinted it might transfer control of its UK unit trust business to Frankfurt in the wake of the scandal — would move to buy back the three funds completely.

Weinstock bows out with attack on 'erosion of trust'

Roger Cowe on departure of 'shy genius' from GEC

LORD Weinstock bowed out of his 36th and last annual meeting as a director of GEC yesterday with an attack on corporate governance reforms which he said were destroying trust in British boardrooms. After a meeting which began with a public apology from the chairman, Lord Prior, over GEC's handling of the controversial contract awarded to new managing director George Simpson, Lord Weinstock said he was concerned at criticisms made by shareholders. "In the last few years we have seen examples of greed and the unrestrained exploitation of privileges in some companies. But the Greenbury and Cadbury codes are not tablets of stone handed down from Mount Sinai. Lord Weinstock said he agreed with most of the Greenbury principles, but warned that non-executive directors should not be expected to be "monitors" of their executive colleagues. He argued that boards need cohesion and support, not suspicion, from non-executives. He told the GEC shareholders that corporate governance should not be an excuse for persecuting directors. "If you don't trust them, sell your shares. If you do trust them,

Seasoned regulator may have to drop light touch

Lisa Buckingham

IT'S déjà vu for Phillip Thorpe, the youthful but hard-nosed City regulator — one of whose first tasks was to levy a huge fine on Morgan Grenfell. The £180,000 penalty in 1994 related to MG's investment management department and its involvement in the Maxwell affair. Two years later, other weaknesses have emerged that Mr Thorpe hinted he regarded as almost inevitable. When the recent Jardine Fleming fracas erupted, he said the case "amply illustrated the danger of firms paying insufficient attention to the responsibilities which

Merger nurses care sector

Ian King

THE consolidation of Britain's fledgling private nursing-home industry continued yesterday when Takare and Court Cavendish merged to form the new group, while Court Cavendish chairman Chai Patel has been appointed chief executive. Announcing the merger, Mr Bradshaw said that by bringing together two complementary businesses with a broad geographic spread a corporation with greater financial strength would be created. Mr Bradshaw said that he expected the merger to prompt a fresh wave of consolidation in the nursing-home sector, where Court Cavendish became the third

Safeway and BP in link-up

Lisa Buckingham

THE supermarket price war which has spread its buckshot on to Britain's petrol forecourts intensified yesterday with an alliance between Safeway and BP which aims to capture a large slice of the £15 billion convenience grocery market. It is the first joint venture between an oil company and a supermarket group. Cut-throat competition between the two sectors has characterised the retail market in recent years and now about 20 per cent of all petrol sales are controlled by supermarkets. Safeway and BP intend to invest about £100 million over

Foreign investors may push for break-up of Olivetti

John Glover in Milan and Nicholas Baxendale

THE chaos at the Olivetti computer group could provoke a head-on clash between Italian and foreign investors, it emerged last night. The company was plunged into uncertainty this week when Carlo De Benedetti, its charismatic chief, was forced to quit amid allegations from the former finance director that its losses were grossly understated. Close observers of the company believe that Olivetti requires new cash to plug a hole in its balance sheet, foreign investors, who own some 70 per cent of the group, will push for it to be split up and sold off. Italian shareholders, who regard Olivetti as a flag carrier for Italian technology, will almost certainly oppose such a move.

US lift

US lift

IT IS now looking inevitable that the Federal Reserve will have to break with tradition and raise interest rates before November's election. The strength of the US employment numbers suggests an economy expanding at an unsustainable rate but one which will propel Bill Clinton back to the White House. As for John Major, the US boom should help to ensure that Britain's boomlet, seen in the latest production data and housing figures, receives another small nudge.

Seasoned regulator may have to drop light touch

Lisa Buckingham

arise when they delegate business to another entity, whether in the UK or overseas". The 42-year-old New Zealand-trained lawyer's career has spanned the censorship of films and the registration of births, deaths and marriages in Namur. In the South Pacific, to sorting out affairs in the Hong Kong stock market, following the crash of 1987. He came to the UK shortly after that to be immersed in helping the Securities and Investments Board sort out the regulatory tatters left after the Maxwell pensions fiasco. Since then, he has been an outspoken critic of Britain's multi-layered regulatory sys-

Foreign investors may push for break-up of Olivetti

John Glover in Milan and Nicholas Baxendale

Shares in Olivetti remained suspended yesterday as company executives and board members met to agree a statement originally due on Thursday evening. In the three-page statement, which finally appeared yesterday evening, the company said the report had been drawn up "in rigorous observance of company law". Allegations that it would need to further boost reserves to cover write-downs were "totally unfounded", it said. On Thursday, Renzo Francesconi, Olivetti's former director general and the executive responsible for the accusations, met board regulators to explain his charges. Regulators also met with Francesco Caio, Olivetti's chief executive since last July. The company says it plans to sue Mr Francesconi, who resigned after only six weeks at the company.

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Table with 4 columns: Country, Bank, Rate, and another column. Includes Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, USA.

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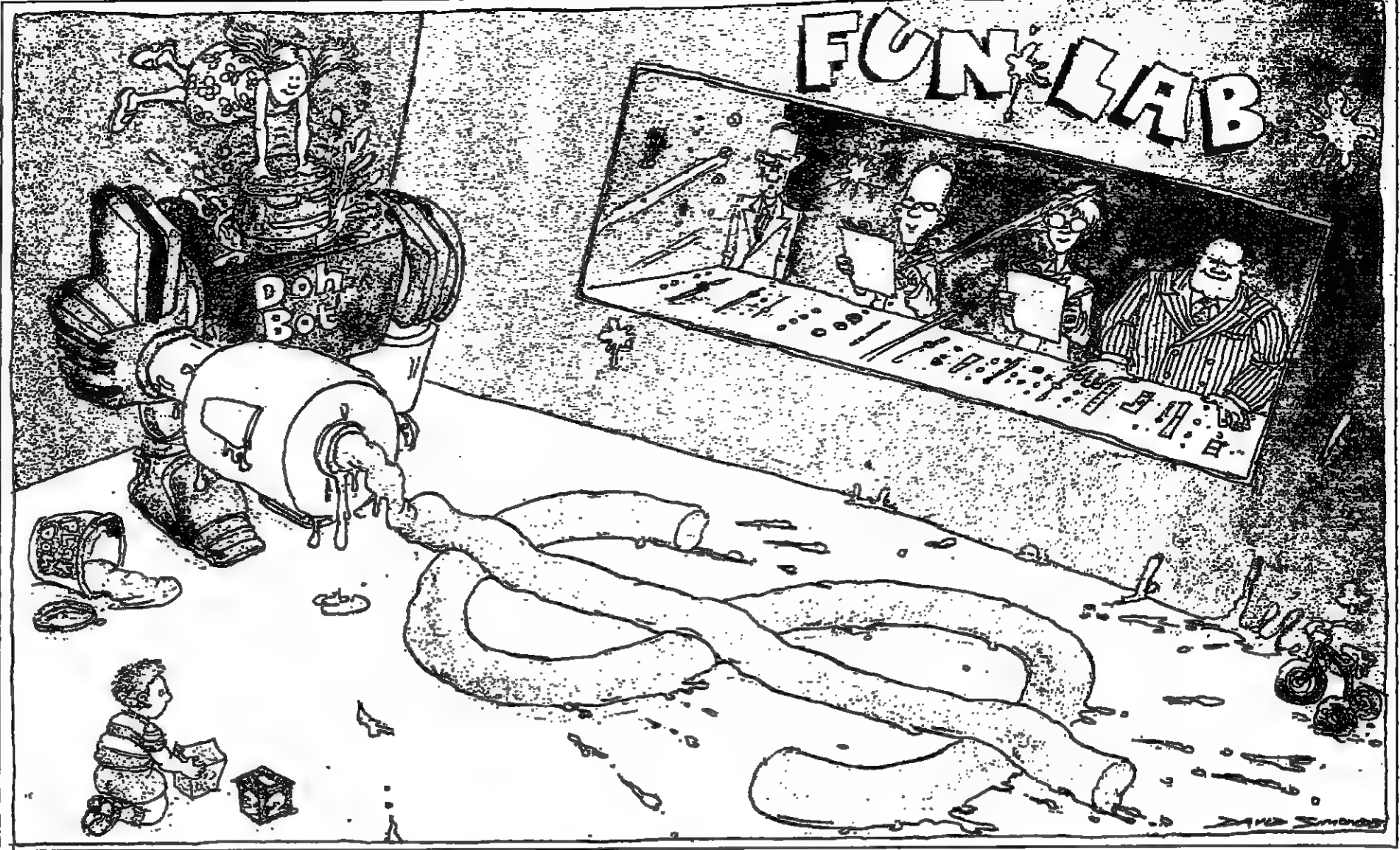
Finance Guardian

It may be child's play but in the US rivalry is ferocious, MARK TRAN reports, and IAN KING finds things are very unfunny in Britain

The toy soldiers

THE Fun Lab may well be the most important room after the chairman's at the headquarters in Providence, Rhode Island, of America's second-largest toy maker. This is where, through a two-way mirror, Hasbro's designers, engineers and marketing executives can observe children playing with a new toy. It was during a Fun Lab session that Hasbro spotted kinks in the Cookie Lovin' Oven Play-Doh set: the toys had difficulty sliding in the oven tray and closing the door.

Toy companies blend playfulness and deadly seriousness. There is something disarming about walking into an office crammed with toys. Ellen Bossert's office overflows with sets of Play-Doh — the sticky, squishy stuff that is a fixture of western childhood. As the Play-Doh team leader, Ms Bossert's job is to devise ever more ways of persuading children aged between three and six to amuse themselves with this "reusable compound". Ms Bossert and her col-



leagues believe they have the best job in the world. "Our job is to think up toys we would want to play with if we were children," Ms Bossert smiled. But the playful atmosphere, reminiscent of the movie *Big*, is leavened with a pinch of paranoia. I was tickled off like a naughty schoolboy for inspecting some toys still in development. "This is confidential material. I'm afraid you have to stay in the conference room," my escort informed me curtly, as if toys were Pentagon secrets.

The competition in this industry is fierce. Battling at the top are California-based Mattel, the maker of Hot Wheels and Barbie, the world's most popular toy, and Hasbro, with such products as Action Man, Monopoly and Scrabble. Like Coke and Pepsi, Mattel, with 1995 sales of \$3.6 billion (£2.3 billion) and Hasbro (\$2.8 billion) are locked in perpetual struggle.

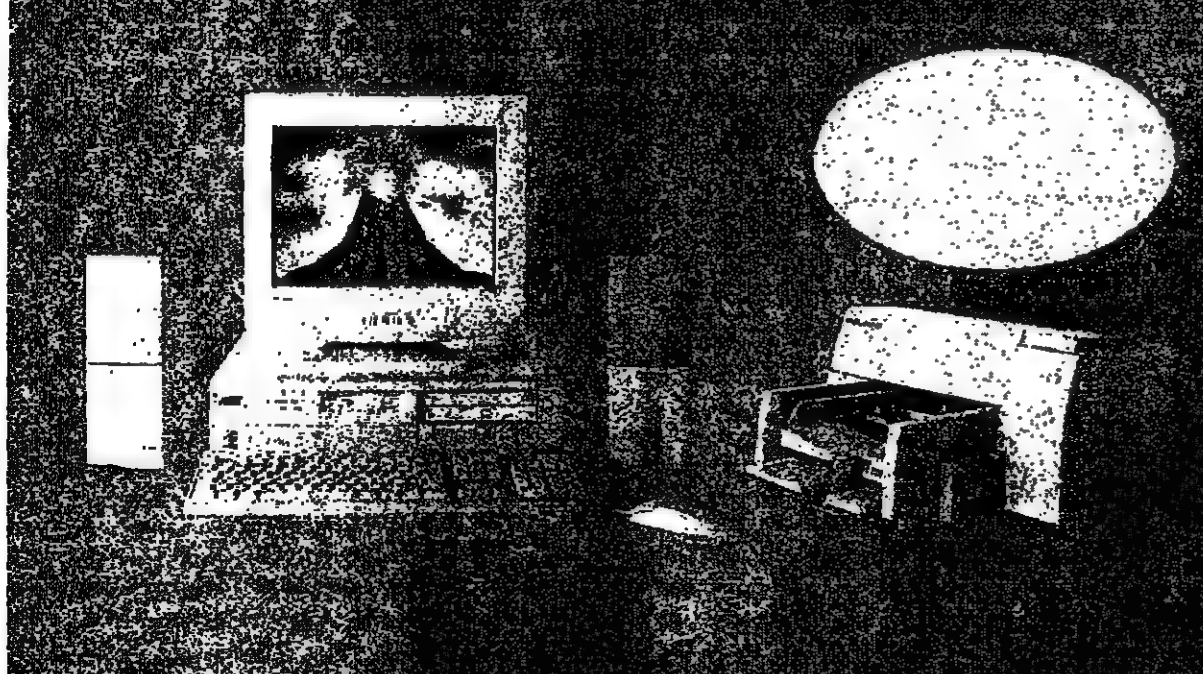
Like the rest of corporate America, the toy industry has seen its share of consolidation in recent years. In February, Mattel launched a \$5.2 billion bid for Hasbro, a combination that would have controlled 28 per cent of America's toy business. The surprise bid quickly fizzled out when Hasbro directors argued that it would never win approval from federal anti-trust regulators and was dropped after institutional support failed to materialise.

Mattel's grab for Hasbro was the logical culmination of the takeover wave in the toy business during the 1990s. The industry used to consist of small and medium-sized family companies. Now, they are huge global entities, assembled like Meccano sets through mergers and acquisitions, with manufacturing plants spread throughout the world. Hasbro's empire includes Milton Bradley (Twister), Parker Brothers (Monopoly), Tonka (cars and lorries), the games division of John Waddington, the UK

company, and Play-Doh. Mattel acquired Fisher-Price in late 1993 for \$1.2 billion and won a fight with Hasbro for the British firm JW Spear & Sons.

The emphasis on size reflects the importance of marketing in today's toy business. Tie-ins with TV shows and films, licensing deals and clout with retail chains like Toys 'R Us are essential weapons in the battle for shelf space. To succeed these days, a toy company has to lavish millions of dollars on marketing. In 1994 Hasbro spent only about a third as much on toy research and development as on marketing. Mattel spent more than five times as much on marketing as on product development and design.

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to make shapes with Play-Doh. Then there is the Deco-rite Celebrate Cake set, which includes "the ultimate wedding cake" and the Rose Garden set, where toys can create scented roses.

In mining name recognition for all its worth, Hasbro and Mattel are emulating the rest of corporate America. For companies like AT&T and Disney, their very names are powerful marketing tools. By concentrating on existing brand names, toy companies have opted for safety. It is much less risky than going out on a limb with a new toy, developed from scratch.

AFTER all, last year Mattel reaped sales of \$1.4 billion just from Barbie and her spin-offs. Gross profit on licensed figures such as Batman and Star Wars characters can run to 50 per cent. Most are produced abroad and require little investment in plant and equipment.

This safety-first approach stems from the failure in the 1980s of companies like Coleco Industries, which launched Cabbage Patch dolls, brand-building comes at the expense of innovation and toy companies have missed out on blockbuster successes. American toy makers flirted with video games, but abandoned their efforts only to see Sega and Nintendo take that business from nothing to annual sales of \$6 billion.

Hard play breaks the British

THE story of the British toy industry is, sadly, a tale of managerial ineptitude, failure to innovate or to keep up with changing trends, and, significantly, inability to compete with cut-price, well-marketed foreign aggressors.

In 1996, the UK toy market is dominated by American giants like Hasbro and Mattel, along with Japanese companies like Nintendo and Sega. British players, like Bluebird Toys, Hornby and Britains, are way down the pecking order.

On the retail side, Sega and Nintendo, along with American group Toys 'R Us, have taken a stranglehold, while most British interest, apart from chains like Woolworths, comes from specialist retailers like Toymaster, Beattie's and Games Workshop.

More than three in every four toys sold in the UK are made in Asia — primarily in low-wage countries like China and Thailand — where working conditions are often appalling. The overseas domination of the British toy market began over 40 years ago, with Scrabble arriving from America in 1954 and Scalextric just behind. Lego arrived in 1960, Barbie followed, and the 1970s were dominated by US-style fads like Frisbees and the Japanese Space Invaders.

The Americans were skilled at intensive television advertising of their products, building up peer pressure among children, and mass marketing one or two products. The British, despite some top-notch brands, had no such expertise, and faced with this competition, British manufacturers — largely family-owned businesses like Lines Brothers — were blown away. The collapse of the industry began in earnest with the fall of Lines,

which, at its peak, owned brands like Meccano, Triang and Dinky. All were soon snapped up by a horde of corporate vultures. Chad Valley was bought by one of the best-known 1970s asset-strippers, John Bentley, before, after other changes of ownership, it was snapped up by Woolworth — then Britain's biggest toy retailer — in 1988.

Similarly, Pedigree, creator of Sindy, was bought by Hasbro. Names like Corgi and Dinky were subject to successive takeovers, other top brands like Airfix, Mettoy and Lesney were taken over during the early 1980s, while Meccano is in French hands. In 1994, Mattel bought Spears Games for \$22 million, and Hasbro bought

Waddington's Games; owners of the UK rights to Monopoly and Cluedo, for \$50 million. For Britain, the future lies in the hands of companies like Vivid Imaginations and Bluebird — small but innovative groups, who hope to counter the US and Japanese giants. Perhaps things really have come full circle.

Quick Crossword No. 8225

Across

- Highest-ranking NCO (8,5)
- Twist out of shape (7)
- Spotted — worked for M15? (5)
- Meat — complaint (4)
- Disparage (8)
- Writer (5)
- Strengthening piece in garment (8)
- Costs chargeable against tax (8)
- Just — beautiful (4)
- Senior (5)
- Edible shellfish (7)
- Block someone's passage (5,2,3,3)

Down

- Sorrowful (3)
- Deference (7)

Section No. 8224

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3 God of Love (4)
4 Lower (5)
5 Aura of mystery (8)
6 Beam supporting floor (5)
7 Gun dog (3,6)
10 Innocent (9)
12 Trapped — went round the bend? (8)
16 Superficial (7)

16 Sanity (6)
18 Small platforms (5)
20 Reckless (4)
23 Snooper (3)

23 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0891 338 248. Calls cost 30p per min, cheap rate, 40p per min at all other times. Service supplied by ATS.

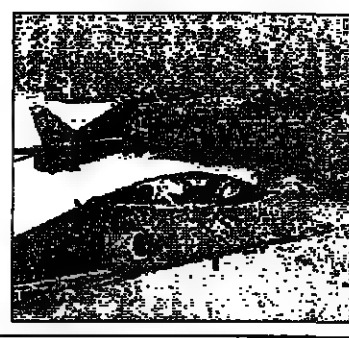
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7 September

Cut off in his prime
John Wayne Bobbitt
The Coles interview 15



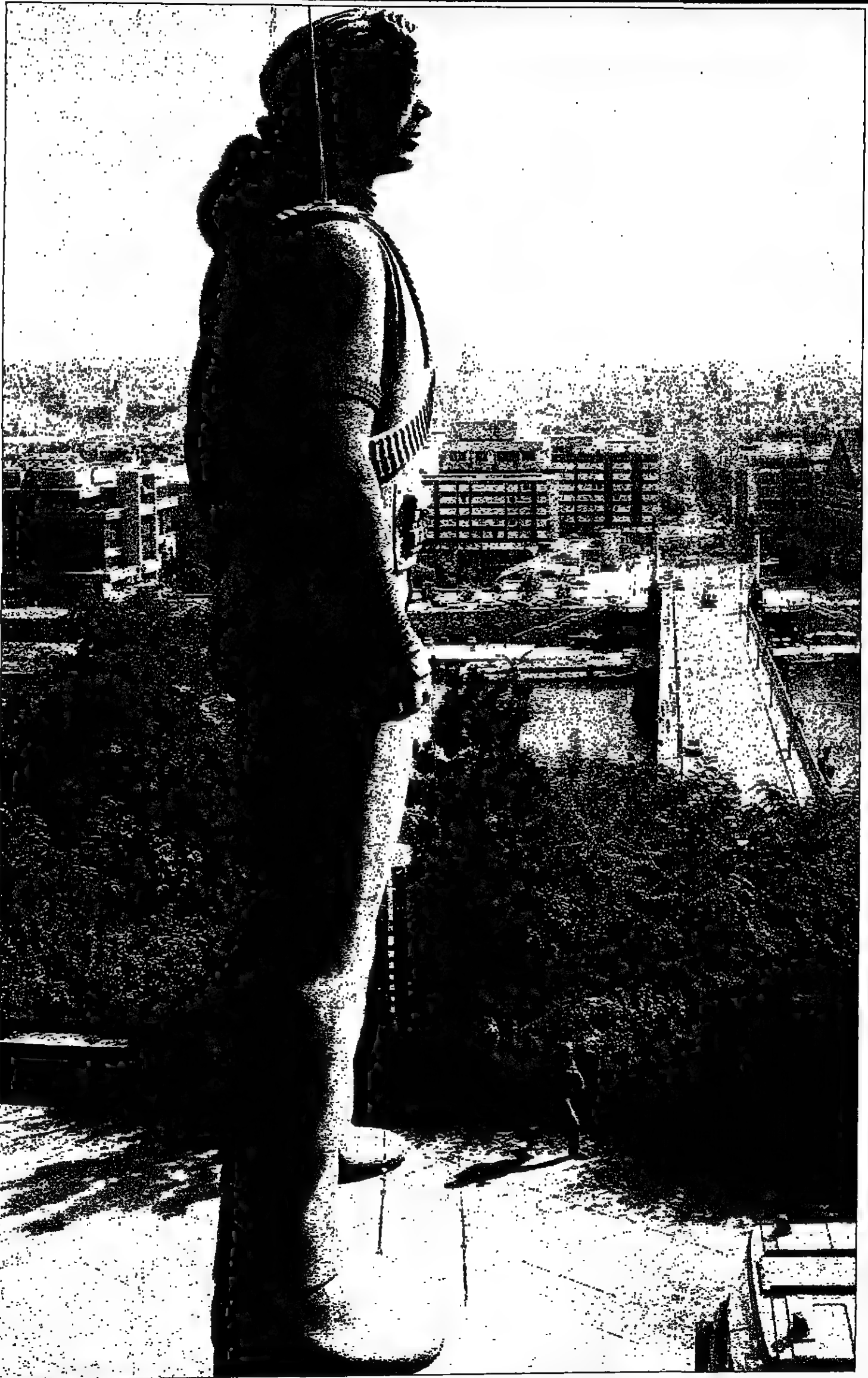
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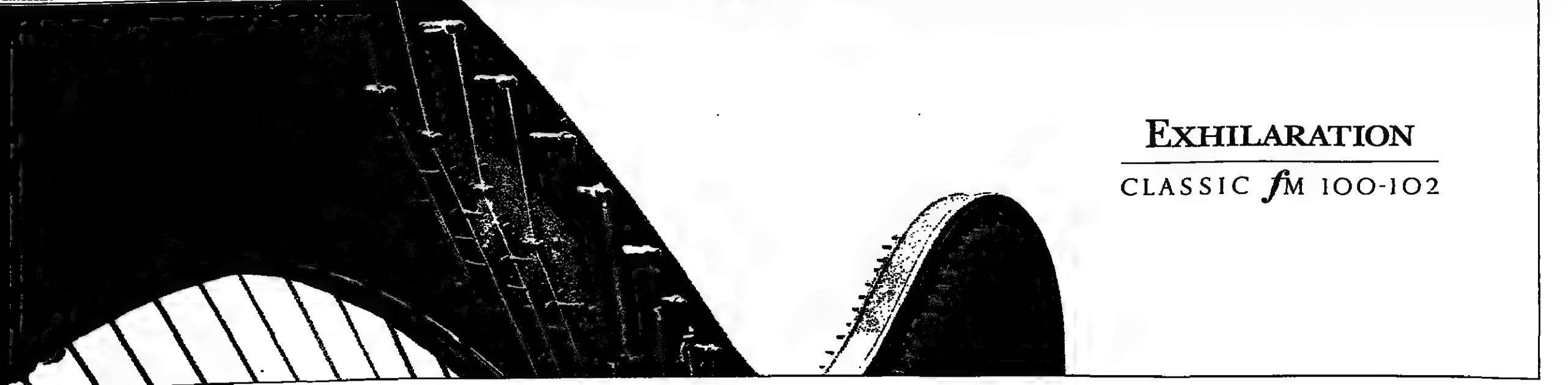
He's Bad, he's Dangerous, he's HIStory... Wacko Jacko is invading Eastern Europe and showing what capitalism can do when it comes to the cult of personality.
Caroline Sullivan on the King of Pop's progress through Prague

Look who's in Stalin's shoes

THE hotel room door opens and there is the 38-year-old man who calls himself the King of Pop. The three young Czech girls who have been invited to meet him in his suite at Prague's Intercontinental Hotel start to whimper. The King of Pop responds with rabbit murrurs of his own. I'm quivering a bit myself, and I'm not even a fan.

The whole point of Michael Jackson is that you don't expect to meet him. His private life has provoked farvid speculation for 15 years because of his inaccessibility. Whether his myriad peculiarities — from the close friendship with a monkey (who, sadly, couldn't make it to Prague), to the brief marriage to Lisa Marie Presley — are fabulously cunning PR strategies or harmless (or otherwise) eccentricities, there is no way of knowing.

boy's charges in a TV interview. The singer is currently countering. A slump in Jackson's popularity is suggested by the sales figures of his current album. HIStory has sold 11 million copies, which would be remarkable by any artist's standards. But for Jackson it is a disappointment. His previous two, Bad and Dangerous, sold 22 million each, and Thriller, the best-selling LP of all time, 45 million.



EXHILARATION
CLASSIC fm 100-102

the British

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PETR JOSEK

Joe Stalin wouldn't like it: Jacko usurps the Man of Steel's plinth

I had sidled into the lift in reception behind Wayne and page 14

the week that was

Us on us

The British view

The spotlight was on Minehead this week after a suggestion to ban shirtless holidaymakers made headlines. Minehead's resident association secretary Malcolm Higgins has been interviewed by newspaper, radio and television stations across Britain and as far away as Canada and Australia. Mr Higgins said, "It is not about the beach. It is about asking people in our shops, our restaurants and our beautiful high street to cover up."

All of East Anglia is in mourning today for the little ones taken by the

sea. We hoped against hope that Jodi and Tom Loughlin had wandered off as children will, had then got lost and would yet be found alive and well. This terrible saga has proved once again that the sea can be lethal, even on a sunny afternoon. Eastern Daily Press

A picture in the Belfast Telegraph shed new light on the phrase balacava chic. The six balacaved UFF loyalists giving a show of strength in north Belfast on Monday night were mistakenly, and rather sexistly described as "gunmen" as there was, in fact, a gunman in their midst. The Irish News

Them on them

The global view

Washington has demonstrated conviction in its immunity from punishment for its belatedly in the possibility of carrying out military action in any part of the world against any state with a policy the White House considers incorrect. Who will be the next scoundrel in line? John Major, perhaps, for oppressing the Catholics in Ulster, Jose Anzar for arresting freedom-loving Basques, or Boris Yeltsin, for his two-year war with the Chechens? Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Moscow.

Ever since Saddam Hussein thumbed his nose at Washington by

sending a huge force into the Kurdish "safe haven" in Northern Iraq, America's credibility has been at stake. The missile attacks were necessary and welcome, but it's past time to formulate a clear policy on Iraq. New York Post.

America's double standards make it easy for US politicians to ignore the fact that their insistence on maintaining sanctions against Iraq for over five years had a huge human cost. Over 600,000 Iraqis, mostly children and invalids, lost their lives because of malnutrition, lack of medicine and proper medical attention. The Star, Amman



WORSE than spots, worse than puberty, worse than the misery of young love, is the hardship and distress suffered by 13 year olds desperate to get steaming pissed, but grossed out by the taste of alcohol. Isn't it just typical of the selfishness of adults, with their pints of warm bitter and malt whiskies, to have forgotten how demanding booze is on the young palate? So Cheers to the drinks

industry for its laudable efforts of late to make the rit-arsed experience more accessible to children. For a year now, the market has been flooded with drinker-friendly "alcopops" — liquor disguised as fruit drinks and packaged in generational non-threatening cans. But the names and images of alcopops are still a little try-hard: "Two Dogs", "Hooch", "Jammin'", "Rhubarb Rhubarb" ... trendy, yes, but the suspicion remains that they are not so much authentically young as over-the-hill marketing people's attempts to resonate with the youth vibe. This week, Carlsberg Teley moved a step nearer to getting it right with the launch of Thickhead, a jellified tangerine-flavoured fluid that looks as if it

should be stripping rust from the sills of a teenager's Escort, but is, amazingly designed for human consumption. Thickhead is as alcoholic as the strongest "headbanging" lagers, but from its vivid colour and the cheery label, you'd imagine it was a give-away: Selloped to the front of the Beano. So misleading is the packaging, with its picture of a tasty young geezer of about 17 pulling a silly face, that the Foramen Group, the industry's voluntary regulator, has asked for a redesign. The name Thickhead, although it does have an appealingly lumpy job-bishness about it along with the implicit promise of a stonking hangover, may be a mistake, but Thickhead is to be welcomed all the same. If Bill Clinton had

had it in time, he could have dropped crates of it all over Iraq this week instead of Cruise missiles. The Iraqis would have been misled by the label, too, and drunk Saddam's health with the stuff. The beverage's name is certain to inspire other new products. Surely it won't be long before an enterprising tobacco company launches a children's cigarette — suggested names: "They're Smokin'", "Life's A Drag", "Butthead", or "Gemini" (it's followed by Cancer). The re-launched Punch magazine could have been a touch more alluring to younger readers had it been given a Thickhead-type name, something more contemporarily violent. "Knee in the Groin" sounds worthy of consideration. Jonathan Margolis

This week last year

September 1, 1995

IN its long and prestigious history, Charterhouse school has been a symbol of all that is strong about the British establishment. Founded 385 years ago as one of Thomas Surton's dual London foundations, it moved to Surrey in 1872 and boasts the Archbishop of Canterbury and former Tory cabinet minister Lord Wakeham among its governors.

In last year's prospectus, headmaster Peter Hobson could barely contain his smug sense of the school's importance. "Charterhouse is proud of its long tradition of academic excellence and its encouragement of individual expression. New boys will be welcomed for the start of the Charterhouse term on Tuesday by a different headmaster, Rev John Witheridge. For a year ago this week, shortly after penning his tribute to the school, Hobson resigned in a scandal that shook England's elite public schools.

He quit officially for "health and personal reasons" a few days before pupils returned to the £12,000-a-year school — motto Deo Dantes Dedi (I Give to God who Gives). The details of his shame were as traditional in their way as the values of the school itself — married headmaster has relationship with teenage escort girl, girl recognises him and informs Daily Mirror in return for fat cheque.



Call me Miss: Henderson

headmaster is asked to resign quietly before his face is spread across the front page. Hobson met 18-year-old Sally Henderson — Mia to her clients — while she was working for an agency in Guildford, Surrey. He phoned her and called at her flat once where they spent more than an hour together. "He paid me £120 in cash and got straight down to business," she told the Mirror. "We got to know each other very well during our short friendship." The paper added, employing a favourite tabloid euphemism, "If Hobson was lonely, he was also unlucky. Henderson recognised him the moment when she greeted him at the front door dressed in a low cut top and a tight black miniskirt. Less than two years earlier, he had given a speech at her private school, Tormead Girls, a few miles from Charterhouse.

After resigning, Hobson went into hiding with his wife Amanda, his career in ruins. Ironically, he had built



Call me Sir: Hobson

his reputation on his traditionalist attitudes to education, morality and discipline. A year on, he is still in hiding and his family refuse to reveal his whereabouts. They attributed his lapse not to plain old lust, but illness. "It is a very sad business for our family," said his brother Andrew, head of classics at Westminster School. "My brother is not well."

Things did not go smoothly for Henderson either. After picking up her undisclosed sum from the Mirror, she went on holiday to Cornwall with her boyfriend — who used to wait in the garden while she entertained clients — to escape attention. She returned to Guildford to find her flat locked up and a note pinned to the door from her landlord: escort work apparently breached the terms of her lease. She too has disappeared, quitting the Sophistocats escort agency in Guildford and cutting all ties with her family. Suzart Millar

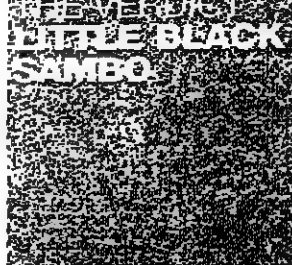


Patrick Hayes, aged 32, is an equities trader in the City — the type Tony Blair tried to woo with his "prawn cocktail" offensive

"Everyone in the City is expecting the election to be a tough battle between both sides. People in my business do not take anything as read. From a personal point of view the pre-election swings and hype will make for a profitable forum. During the pre-election weeks the markets will be very volatile, that can only be good news as far as profits and commission are concerned. City dealers live for these days and don't worry much about the eventual outcome. We're strictly interested in short term gains."

Blair is a real character and everyone is waiting to see if he's got it in him to pull off a win and back up his promises. If he wins, all I'm worried about is how the share index closes after week one. New Labour is definitely more City friendly. Whatever happens it will be an excuse for a vast amount of alcohol and the

opportunity to speculate. Millions will be traded over the phone through spread-betting with financial bookmakers, which are like a City boy's Ladbrokes. The bookmakers offer a variety of prices, not just on who will win the election, but anything from the number of seats to how many days it will be until the next election. I lost an awful lot of money in 1992 because I bet heavily on a dip in the market on the back of Labour victory — obviously neither happened. At the moment the quote is 9 to 4 for a Conservative victory and 7 for a Labour victory. That means if I put £700 on Labour and they win I get £200. My money will be on a Labour victory, but to spice it up a bit I'll buy seats at £100 each and go for Labour getting 340 seats. That means if they win 350 seats the difference is 20 seats, so I stand to make £2,000. But if Labour only get 300 seats, then I'm 40 seats down, so I'll lose £4,000. The beauty of spread-betting is the more you are right, the more money you make. Whichever party ends up in power, they will make a killing in terms of taxes from these kinds of transactions. In the longer term, no doubt some of my clients will be looking to become non-residents and toying with the idea of off-shore accounts. But I think the prospect of a Labour government is not quite as shocking as it was in the late eighties and early nineties. Interview by Hannah Pool



The children's book is being rewritten to make it PC. Do you agree?

No I do wonder if the people who are so strongly against it have actually read the story. To use the name Sambo to me would indicate a highly intelligent, brave little boy who would indicate a highly intelligent, brave little boy. Pamela Shirley, publisher of Little Black Sambo.

I loved Little Black Sambo as a child. Black Sambo was a wonderfully warm and maternal figure. The whole thing is ironic when one has to stumble for words over children's toys and books. Gillian Bevis, Emd, Elyton's daughter.

Yes it's difficult to see how it could be rewritten to be made less objectionable. I can't see how you could have it in any school without it carrying a government health warning. Ms Pat Hollister, Fleet Primary School, Camden

The story is wonderful but her drawings are stereotypical and insulting and so are the names. Frances Lincoln, who is hoping to publish the rewritten version of Black Sambo in the spring.

Look who's in Stalin's shoes

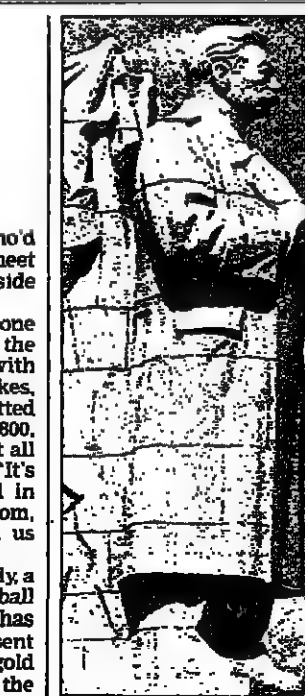
4page 13 the Czech girls, who'd been selected at random to meet Wacko from a crowd of 300 outside the hotel.

On the eighth floor, we'd all gone through a metal detector, even the room service waiter arriving with a tray of bread rolls, fish cakes, broccoli and carrots. We'd trotted down the corridor to suite 800, with me amazed at how easy it all was. Wayne called out, "It's Wayne," the door opened and in we trooped to a tidy living room, where the superstar watched us with wary cat eyes.

Downstairs in reception, Willy, a heavyset girl in a gold baseball cap, is weeping with rage. She has been waiting since 9am to present Jackson with a handmade gold sceptre in a glass case bearing the phrase "To The Legendary King of Pop". This "king" business, incidentally, is starting to grate. It's everywhere — on a two-storey-high banner on the hotel, on the laminated tour passes. Doesn't the king proclaim his kingdom a bit too loudly?

"Wayne knows I am here all day, but he brings up these little girls and not me," Willy is telling a cluster of fans, the ones rich enough to have booked the \$305-a-night rooms. They are German and Dutch, mostly, but there are also two lipsticked Italian glamour pussies, Pamela and Lucia, who claim to have met Jackson many times and haughtily ignore the other fans.

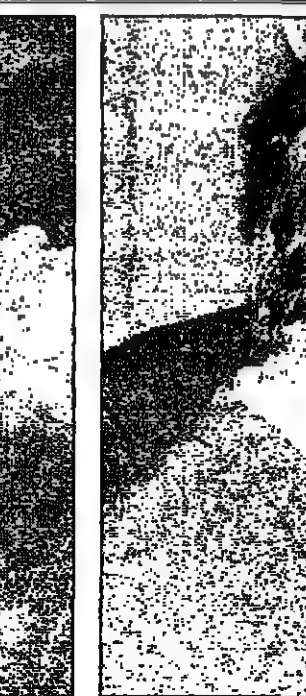
Everyone else — the Czechs, that is — is stuck outside, screaming for "My-kool" to come to the window. He frequently does, throwing flowers and, once, a pillow, which bursts and litters Blvd



HIStory lessons: Stalin has passed on: President Havel meets the King

Parizka with feathers, which the fans rush to collect. Half an hour later I return to the official business of visiting Jonathan Morrish, Sony Records' head of corporate relations. As I arrive a waiter is leaving Jacko's suite with the untouched fish cakes, and something new has been added to the decor — a life-size cardboard cut-out of the man propped against his door. Perhaps it's so he can see something he loves when he leaves the room.

"I've never seen anything like this," says Morrish. "You should have seen when he came in from the airport — they were lined along the road for about three miles."



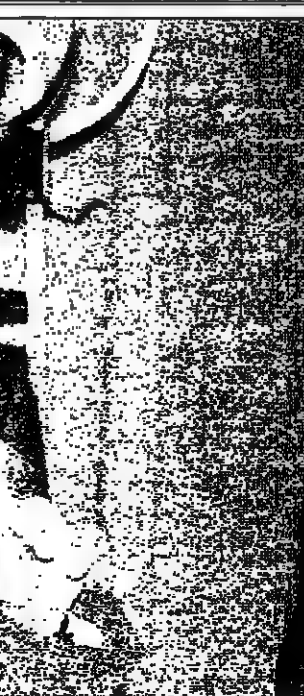
At the concert site at Letna Plain park, the stage is by now half built. Both history and Jackson's multi-ethnic credo are symbolised by Roman, Egyptian and Mayan statues. "This production is history the history of the world," says Benny Collins, production director. The residents in the Communist-built brutalist concrete apartment block overlooking the park are in for some show. Pulp's Jarvis Cocker, who invaded Jackson's Brit Awards performance because he was "sickened by his messianic delusions" would not be impressed. Ah, but if only he could see the statue...

Propagand, the Czech promoters, have done a fine job of plastering Jackson's image around town. The Rococo city centre is sullied by HIStory posters, in a striking contrast between Wacko and Prague's



delicately gilded architecture. The entire staff of the new Bon-ton record shop is kitted out in Jackson shirts. (He was supposed to open the shop, "but I guess he was in a bad mood," shrugs a clerk.) The newsgazette in Wenceslas Square, Prague's Piccadilly, are stuffed with Jackson souvenir magazines. Awareness of his presence is total.

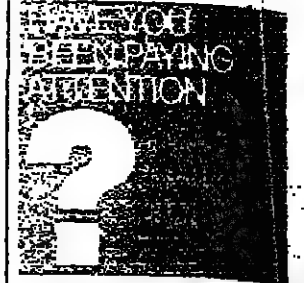
WHILE it's no longer unusual for western artists to play this most westerised Eastern capital — Paul Weller and Tina Turner have only just been — no one has done it on this scale, so hopefully. And Prague is going out of its way to welcome him. Since the Velvet Revolution of 1989 the city has embraced capitalism with an avidity unmatched in



any other former Eastern Bloc nation. The old Prague survives in surly shop assistants but the old buildings now house Estée Lauder and The Gap and nearly everyone speaks English. No wonder Jackson decided to start here — the place could easily perpetuate a fantasy that the cult of Wacko has toppled Communism and is the new ideology as symbolised by that statue, which can be clearly seen from his penthouse suite. Back at the Intercontinental after "sightseeing", Jackson seals himself in his room and isn't seen till the next evening. One can only wonder how he whiles away the hours he's forced to spend in hotels in every town he visits. He has his business interests to occupy him, the latest one being a partnership with a Saudi prince to establish a global entertainment company dedicated to "upholding



family values". Then, when in South Africa recently he managed to get out to meet Nelson Mandela. Otherwise, it seems, he stays in, withering into an ever more bizarre character whose only contact with real people is the fans Wayne brings up in parties of three or four. But how long can Jackson opt out of life with the I'm-just-a-sty-little-boy-who-never-had-a-child-hood excuse? For ever, if he likes. But at approaching 40 you can't help wondering if he ever longs for a real life? In the end, Willy and her sceptre finally meet him. So how was it, we demand when she emerges. "He thanked me," she swoons. Isn't that a pretty poor return for a 24-hour wait? Willy sternly replies: "He is not like anyone else — he is the most special person in the world." Indeed, the King of Pop.



1. "Does the bird in a cage sing as sweetly as the bird who is free?" Whose profound question? (a) Sharon Stone (b) Eric Cantona (c) Regis Debray

2. Rumer, Scout, Tallulah Belle, but will she make it four? Who?

3. Silver-blue Ford Escort, 20 years old, one previous owner. A snip at £65,000. Who sold it?

4. "Bad hair day?" appeared on a new Conservative party poster denouncing Cherie Blair. True or false?

5. Who was commemorated on a new first-class stamp? (a) Shakespeare (b) Lawrence of Arabia (c) Eric Cantona (d) A Japanese-owned glove puppet

6. Nelson loves who? (a) Emma Hamilton (b) Sharon Stone (c) Grace Machel

7. New Tory weapon: new danger for Labour. But who is it?

8. One sportsman was counted out; another was in the pits. Who were they?

9. For whom is blue no longer the colour?

10. Jemima's Tangy Ketchup, Jemima's Chilli and Garlic Sauce, Jemima's Mix Pickle. But who is Jemima?

11. Who has replaced Paul Gambaccini on Radio 3? (a) Steve Wright (b) Peter Hobday (c) Jemima Tangy-Ketchup (d) Peter Maxwell Davies

12. Who's cutting down on office duties to spend more time with the children? (a) Jemima Mix-Pickle (b) Cecilia Parker Bowles (c) Tiggy Legge-Bourke (d) Tiggy Legge-Bourke-Wicket

13. Whose hat is this and why is its wearer so cheerful?

14. The referee's a w***. A what?

15. Who will play Lionel, a rugby-playing Romeo, in Le Bonheur est dans le Pré? (a) Eric Cantona (b) Regis Debray (c) Gerard Depardieu (d) Christoph Lambert

Score one for each question. Answers on back page.

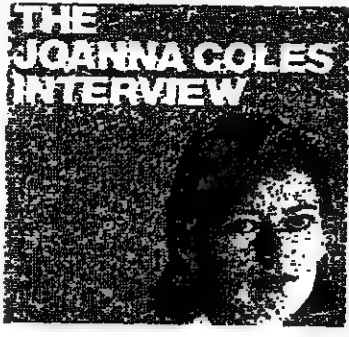
It die John now America President his

Teacher leave the advantage kids alone

مكتبة الامم المتحدة

'It feels better than it ever did, much more sensitive'

John Wayne Bobbitt is now recognised by more Americans than is the President. So is he glad his wife cut off his penis?



THE JOANNA COLES INTERVIEW

JOHN Wayne Bobbitt meets us in the bar of the Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street, London, and to the mild surprise of the other drinkers, promptly starts doing press-ups on the bar floor.

"I've put on weight," he gasps, as his PR draws us to one side and hisses: "You know he's just had a dick extension?" I didn't, though three years ago Bobbitt's dick was a source of worldwide fascination when it was chopped clean off by Bobbitt's wife, buried out of her car window, retrieved by two policemen and, during a nine-hour operation, sewn straight back on again.

It feels better now than it ever did before, much more sensitive," pants Bobbitt, leading us up to his room. "What did you say your name was, Paul right?"

"Er, Joanna," I say brightly. He nods. Somewhere in the distance, alarm bells begin to ring. He hammers violently with both fists against the door which is opened by his old schoolfriend from Niagara, Robert Johnson. It was Johnson who drove Bobbitt to hospital the night Lorena reached for the 12-inch carving knife.

"I saw blood, I thought he had cut his finger, so I figured he needed stitches," says Rob slowly. Rob says everything slowly.

"So I got up and brushed my teeth. John was very calm and then he said, 'They had better be able to make me a new penis.' I was kinda like what? He didn't say what had happened, but I kinda sped up."

"Do you want me to take my shirt off?" interrupts Bobbitt, emerging from the bathroom where, to my surprise, he has just removed his trousers. He then removes his shirt and his chest which wobbles. "Hey," he cries, "it looks like I'm pregnant." Why did Lorena cut off his penis? Bobbitt looks puzzled. "Why did she cut it off? Yeah, um, why did she cut it off? Mmm, er lying back on the bed and talking to the photographer is this where you want me? Do you want me in other poses like this? [He pouts, then unwraps a cigar from the bedside table, and rolls it under his nose.]

"So you wanna know why she did it huh? I broke her heart. Broke her heart. Hurt her feelings, hurt her feelings. She, er, that's the way I can explain it." Did he beat her? "Untrue. She was very possessive and she didn't want to get divorced."

Rob, who has been sitting quietly, suddenly interjects. "You look fat, John!" Bobbitt looks pleased. "That's good though, ain't it?" "Good?" queries Rob. "Because fat turns to muscle!" exclaims Bobbitt. He points at Rob. "Now you're skinny."

Rob points back. "You used to be real skinny, John."

Heigh ho, I intervene breezily. Why did you have a penis extension? Bobbitt repeats the question as if he hasn't understood. "Why did I have a penis extension? To get bigger, to feel better about myself."

And does he? "Yes, it's bigger. It's better, it's stronger!"

Did he realise what Lorena was doing as she cut it off? "No, it was just one fell swoop," and he mimes a scything movement. "She just pulled it up and cut it off. I said: 'Give that back.' But she ran and I was looking for it but I couldn't find it, so I woke Rob."

Still that's all behind him now,

and Bobbitt has a new and reasonably lucrative career as a porn star. His first film, Bobbitt Uncut, has sold 100,000 copies in America — and according to his agent, it's the bestselling adult movie of all time. He grabs hold of his belly and fingers the crumpled flesh. "I've got the love handles from hell," he grumbles. "I've gained some weight the past few months. I weigh 197lbs now, and I should be 175-180lbs. I'm way overweight. I'm still strong though." He flexes his arms and I can't help thinking he looks rather sinister.

In a recent survey 86 per cent of the American public said they would recognise President Clinton; 96 per cent could recognise John Wayne Bobbitt. Given the money and fame, is he glad it happened?

"Yeah, I'm able to do a lot of things with my penis now." Such as? "Stand-up comedy, entertainment. It gives me more to talk about than just current events."

"Exactly," murmurs Rob. "More to talk about, exactly."

"I want to write a book about it," says Bobbitt, ignoring him. "And Lorena's not going to like that because it has to do with the truth. She doesn't want people to know the truth, well the Bible says the truth shall set you free."

"What is the truth then?" "That I'm alive, I couldn't die. A lot of people harbour ill feelings," he says earnestly. "Lorena acted the way she did out of jealousy and hatred and revenge. You have to control ill feelings. Some people can't. Like Saddam. Our government doesn't understand Saddam Hussein has ill feelings."

"Exactly, nods Rob. "Exactly."

"I wish I was back in the Marines," says Bobbitt, miserably.

Some people say Bobbitt has been taken advantage of. That the money he earned from his early TV appearances and now his films has gone to lawyers and porno agents rather than to John himself. Is this true?

"Yeah, lotta people made money from me, yeah, I was naive. I'm doing a lot of things on my own now, acting, getting in shape. I'm overweight right now."

"And you're taking real estate classes," volunteers Rob, supportively. Bobbitt picks at the counterpane. "I don't like this hotel much. Why am I here?"

What, I wonder, do his parents think about what's happened?

"My parents? I don't know," says Bobbitt. "My parents? What do they think Rob?"

"What do your parents think?" echoes Rob, bewildered.

"Yeah, what do you think about what my parents think, Rob?"

Rob remains silent.

"I don't think they don't mind what I do," says Bobbitt finally, "as long as it's not destructive."

"They don't like you making porno movies," warns Rob.

"That's not destructive," protests Bobbitt. Then suddenly he looks as if he's not sure and turns to me frowning. "Are porno films destructive?" And he thinks about Rob's comment some more. "So, they don't like me making movies huh? There is a violent hush.

So what would have happened if the police hadn't found the rest of his penis?

"I woulda been sewn up. Mmm, and [laughing] I would have become a transvestite! It's four fingers wide now. Four fingers, it used to be three, now it's four fingers." And he holds up four chubby fingers.

And girl-friends, does he have many? "I've slept with about 30 women in three years, so on average that's about five women a year. No, wait, about 15 women a year."

"That's 12 a year," corrects Rob slowly. "One a month."

"One a month," agrees Bobbitt. "Is that a lot?" He shakes his head as if conversing with himself. "That's not a lot, 30 women would be a lot, but 10 women a year, one or two a month, that's OK." And he looks quite chuffed.



John Wayne Bobbitt... 'Is this where you want me? Do you want me in other poses like this? I've got the love handles from hell'

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

"I remember the doctor when I got to the hospital he flipped out. He thought I'd cut my wrists 'cos of the blood. He was in shock. I shocked the doc! That's great, right? You gotta write that down, I shocked the doc! He didn't know what to do." He starts laughing again. "They said it would take six hours for my penis to decompose and they found it in two hours. It was three fingers wide, it's now four fingers wide. I've gained a lot of weight since then too. Mmm, a lotta weight. I call my penis Barbell."

Barbell?

"It used to be my nickname at school, Johnny Barbell."

Before we can explore this further, the PR bangs on the door and reminds us to mention Frank-Penis, Bobbitt's second film, which includes footage from the operation to extend his penis. Rob blanches. What would he have done in Bob-

bitt's position? "I wouldn't have done this," says Rob, starting at Bobbitt's black cowboy boots next by his bed. "I would have committed suicide."

"Hey, are these photos going to make me fatter than I am already?" worries Bobbitt.

"I'm an engineer in North Carolina," remarks Rob.

"He makes prosthetic penises," roars Bobbitt. "He makes a nub for your nub!" He slaps his stomach, drops the cigar and nearly falls off the bed whooping. I read one piece about him which suggested he was stupid. What does he think about that is he?

"I am," he nods gravely. "I am. Tell me honestly, how do you find me?" But he doesn't really want an answer. In fact, he wants for nothing except to lose weight. I wonder what he does at home in Las Vegas all day?

"I ride jet skis, like a moped on

the water. (He pats his stomach.) And I drive a pick-up truck, four by four, big tyres, all chrome, it's really nice. This is amazing," he says, grabbing his belly in his fists. "This is the heaviest I've been. I've gained a lot of weight. You know I was shy and introverted until I joined the Marines."

Is that true, I ask Rob?

"I would say that he joined the Marines and changed," nods Rob.

"I was a very shy person, Bobbitt continues. "Lorena was the first girl I'd gotten involved with. I gotta get a dog, a German Shepherd. I don't think about being famous. I just try to be a normal person but I was promiscuous, promiscuous, ha ha, yeah. All my friends are promiscuous, except him." And he points to Rob.

"The friends I grew up with," draws Rob, "they're all drug addicts and losers."

"Losers," whispers Bobbitt roll-

ing the word tastily round his mouth. "You're not a loser, Rob."

Do you take drugs, I ask Bobbitt? "I'm taking steroids right now, just to pump up these," he says, flexing his arms. "I'm real strong and I'm still fast. I just ran three miles in 16 minutes 45 seconds. Three miles in 16 minutes and 45. That's a five minute mile, well five-fifteen. Pretty fast! Fifteen, 16, 17, less than five minutes, five 45 right?"

I'm feeling rather dazed, so I ask Rob if Bobbitt has changed at all?

"At times he was getting arrogant," starts Rob.

"Yeah," interrupts Bobbitt. "I was a superstar man! Arrogant, yeah."

But now he's not as bad," concedes Rob, smiling. "Actually, he's kinda back to where he was before. He's OK, you know, really."

'Why did I have a penis extension? To feel better about myself'

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JEREMY HARDY

Teacher — leave those advantaged kids alone

HAVING acknowledged that this was not the first week of the school term in Scotland and that private schools, as I understand it, re-open after the opening of Parliament, let us assume that education is topical this week. That appears to have been the assumption of Gillian Sheppard, who proposed that five-year-olds should be tested.

Doubtless the business community needs to know the aptitude of infants in its area so that it can make long-term recruitment projections. But the ostensible reason for the exams — "You may turn over your fuzzy felt farm sets now and begin" — is to enable the calculation of value-added. You need to know what your child is worth to begin with so that you can see how your investment is doing.

Parents, it seems, must be vigilant at all times to make sure that teachers are giving value for money. We are not discussing teachers in private schools here. It is assumed that they are all excellent and dedicated, otherwise they

would not have deserted the state sector to put their publicly-funded training into practice for the benefit of the few.

Teachers in state schools are assumed to be mad, bad or illiterate, unless they work in the nursery, where they absorb the blows of madness with machetes; in that case they are paid virtually nothing. Nursery nurses excepted, teachers are considered a bad lot.

And responsible parents, who, after all, only want the best for their children — bollocks to anyone else's children — must ensure that all the good work they do at home, preparing their tots to sit exams and enter one of the professions, is not undermined by incompetent and political extremists in the classroom.

You see, these days, what with all this political correctness, although your children start primary school ready to take their A levels — in fact, an A level gene has been discovered — what happens is that they get held back by

other people's children, who tend to be stupid and badly-behaved. Then the teacher compounds the situation by not recognising that your children are best and they forget everything you taught them. Many five-year-olds are given hardly any homework at all, meaning that they are forced to play with them.

The Government's education reforms have only begun to stop this madness. If you visit a random sampling of classrooms in the country, you will find that teachers still vary enormously. They look different from each other, they have widely differing personalities, they approach different children's needs in different ways, they employ their own skills and experience rather than a nationally-endorsed standard.

But that is beginning to change. Teachers are being forced to spend more time assessing children, recording everything that happens in the classroom, and answering to Ofsted. Gone are the days when they could sit around all day

teaching. And, thankfully, more and more primary schools are forcing children to wear uniforms. This not only instils a sense of paramilitary discipline, it also gives the school a corporate identity, making it attractive to more

now have catchment areas which manage to avoid rented property altogether. And they still fulfil the aspirations of liberal parents who like there to be a "nice mix" — which means a tiny number of non-white children, "some of them absolutely beautiful!"

Healthy dialogue ensures that bright children — that is people's own children — are not bored by being set work already covered by their private tutors. The danger for advantaged children is that, if they are not stretched academically, they may behave in a way which appears on the surface to resemble the naughtiness more usually associated with ordinary children.

With tests starting at five, children can have a chart on the fridge measuring their academic stretching. The tests need not be obtru-

sive or traumatic: there's time enough for that later on. But by the age of 11, a clear picture of future prospects will have emerged.

This all sounds as though things like fun and happiness have been forgotten. On the contrary, the happiness of parents is inseparable from their children's qualifications and many PTA evenings are tremendous fun. What the kids do after finishing their education is up to them. Once childhood is done with and out of the way, they can enjoy what leisure time they have in any number of productive ways. They can even take a course! It's never too late to learn and the downside of spending your youth being tested is that there's never any time to learn anything.

As for careers, academic success will have secured earning power if not any sense of fulfilment or joy. The important thing is that graduates can choose in the job market. If they really want to, they can throw careersism to the wind and do something thankless, like being a primary school teacher.

It's never too late to learn — and the downside of spending your youth being tested is that there's never any time to learn anything

business-like parents. These parents can't necessarily afford private education but, if they take over a promising state school, they can turn it around. Indeed, some of the better state primary schools



Judges? Social workers? Not in front of the children

DON'T know the details of the awful case in Staffordshire, in which a man was jailed and banned from his home for spanking his unruly son, though in my experience these things tend to be more complicated than one first thinks. But there is an important point: there are two great fantasies about children shared only by people who are not parents. One is that each sex behaves as it does because of gender stereotyping. Those of us who have both boys and girls know that they spring from the womb with entirely different characters. The other is that children are essentially innocent, and are only corrupted by the noxious effect of the adult world. Anyona, meaning every parent in the world who's ever been driven to the brink of sanity by their own children, knows what nonsense that is. My modest proposal is that no one who is childless, including council officials, judges and social workers, should be allowed anywhere near important decisions about children and child-rearing. JOURNALISTS usually read all the papers, and I particularly enjoy the Independent. It has become pleasingly eccentric lately, discovering things everyone else knew

ages ago. It's like visiting a much-loved doxy uncle who says: "I've got this wonderful new machine. Look, you put bread in the slot, and two minutes later out pops toast." Next month I expect an Indy headline: "Eco-disaster looms as British trees lose their leaves." This week they perceived the election campaign had already begun: "Months early, and they're off!" In fact, the campaign began on April 10, 1992, the day after the last election. In Britain we now have the American-style permanent campaign, as Blair will discover when he tries to reform Question Time and walks straight into the very first Tory trap. I'M FASCINATED by the way language changes through some strange capillary action, without any obvious means of transfer. There's a new phrase you hear in pubs and garages now: "Top man." It means thanks, as in "Here's your pint, sir." "Top man!" And the word "well" is increasingly used as an all-purpose intensifier. "Well-hung", and "in whom I am well pleased" are familiar, but it's also tacked in front of adjectives now. I've recently heard "well happy", "well rich", and even a "he's done a well good job". The other day a mum at our

school gate told her child to hurry up: "They've well gone in." Are these phrases injected into the language by TV programmes I don't see? Does someone invent them? Or are they just domestic London speech which spreads out to the provinces, like the awful London accent? I've heard 'well happy' and 'well rich'. A mum at our school gate told her child to hurry up: 'They've well gone in' NEW PHRASES whose provenance we know include fresh euphemisms for warfare. According to the experts, the Americans were not bombing Iraq, but "sending Saddam Hussein a message". As in, "Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more / And send a message with our English dead", or "we shall send a message on the beaches, on the landing grounds... we shall never RSVP". At the Pentagon, missiles aren't

aimed at targets, but "find the right address". It's all unreal, at a distance, like e-mail or the internet, which also sends random messages to random places in cyberspace. It's just tough on the people who've got the wrong address. THE PRINCE'S Trust has just finished a massive fund-raising campaign in which a thousand celebrities have been asked to paint their own masks. These will be auctioned for a large sum. The mask is a wonderfully comforting, concealing device, and it's fascinating to see what people want to hide behind. Prince Charles has painted leaves to cover his face, as if he is deep in a forest, or at least something in talk to. Tony Blair has drawn predictable red roses, whereas John Major has painted an Elysian landscape, perhaps the mythical England he wants to recreate. Denis Healey has imitated Munch's The Scream, which tells us a lot, yet Dave Stewart, the pop musician who said he was too happy, has done much the same. Jennifer Ehle has painted her plain blue with a signature, which is dull, but since I adore her, it's the one I would buy if I could afford it.

AN AUTUMN of embarrassment looms for the Tories, what with Michael Portillo at the party conference and John Major possibly giving evidence in the Guardian's libel action against Neil Hamilton in the cash-for-questions case. (I ran into George Carman QC at the Punch launch this week. He was musing on a line of questioning in case the Esther Rantzen business ever gets to court; he would contrast her income with that of the nurses she criticised. It was a brief moment, but a joy to see a maestro at work: as if Kiri Te Kanawa were to interrupt your chat by singing the chorus of Wonderwall.) Now there is news of Steve "Shagger" Norris's memoirs. His book, Changing Trains, has been described as "making Alan Clark's diaries look like Mr Potter's". A great exaggeration, I am sure, though I gather that he does not only reveal what happens in government, but also discusses his own varied and hectic love life. Norris has been minister for transport in London for years now. He has clearly learned the city of the popular old London clichés: "Always room for one more on top!"

SWALLOWED TONY BLAIR has a habit of bouncing people. Long ago, with Neil Kinnock's approval, he bounced the Labour Party into abandoning the closed shop. Later, as party leader, in a passage delicately omitted from the text of a conference leadership speech, he bounced it into the operation which eventually killed Clause 4. Even the deputy leader was only let into the secret a few hours before. It must be unsettling for old Labour Party members now, days to open the papers. They go to bed subscribing to certain views and beliefs and wake up to find they believe in something entirely different. Many thought they believed that adjusting the tax regime was something you did to help the needy at the expense of the rich. Now they find they have to believe in a scheme for a 10p band which won't help the very poorest, who don't pay tax, but will benefit every taxpayer, including the rich. But what's happened in Scotland adds a new twist to the bounce technique. First, the Scottish party found itself bounced into a commitment to a referendum on devolution, one on the principle, one on taxation powers. Last weekend, the leadership bought the support of a banky Scottish Labour executive by promising a second, separate referendum after the legislation had gone through, again on the taxation question. But now, in a further bounce, that commitment has been unilaterally junked. They've gone back to the Blair solution. New Labour: the party whose central is a bonny castle.

Hawks and doves



Angie Zelter was one of four women who damaged a Hawk jet with hammers. She argues the act was justified to prevent mass murder in East Timor. Robert Key, a Tory member of the defence committee, disagrees



Robert Key, left, and Angie Zelter

Dear Robert, A THIRD of the population of East Timor has been killed by Indonesia in its 20-year illegal occupation. These still living have been corralled into concentration camps, where many die of starvation. Entire tribes have been exterminated and their land settled by Indonesians from hundreds of miles away. Western support for President Suharto's regime from the late seventies to the present day, by re-stocking Indonesia's arsenals, has enabled him to carry out genocide in East Timor. Britain continues to support Suharto for strategic reasons and for gold, timber and oil. The mass killings are covered up and accused because the public would be appalled at the extent of British collusion. British Aerospace and the British government know full well that BAE Hawk aircraft have been used to murder unarmed villagers and to terrorise the population. Other British

equipment, including tanks and missiles, are regularly used. Britain is currently Indonesia's main weapons supplier. The present Hawk deal has been likened to handing a gun to a serial killer. A thin line held by international law is all that separates legalised killing by soldiers in defence of their country from terrorism. The Indonesian Armed Forces are not engaged in any legitimate war of self-defence. Indonesia is the aggressor illegally occupying neighbouring countries. What is going on in East Timor and also in West Papua is a tragedy. Suharto is a major war criminal; by providing weapons and aid to him the British government is complicit in his crimes. In simple terms, Britain is complicit in mass murder. The sale to Indonesia of weapons and repressive technology, as well as the training of military and police personnel, must end immediately. Yours sincerely, Angie Zelter

Dear Angie, THANK you for your letter. As an elected politician, who as a child narrowly escaped death from a British landmine which killed five of my friends, I need no lessons in piety nor in moral outrage. Don't get me wrong. I condemn the appalling excesses and atrocities which are reported from Indonesia. Of course, Britain does not recognise its sovereignty over East Timor. The question is, what's to be done? Your answer is simple. Ignore the history which created the problem, come to a perverse judgment about Indonesian state institutions and then isolate that nation in the international community. Mine is different. We cannot turn our European backs on people who were ruled by Holland and Portugal, invaded by Japan and then abandoned to "independence" without political structures or institutions to govern what is now the fourth most populous country in the world. From one of the poorest countries, it has risen well into the middle-income bracket. The astonishing fact is that this mixture of tribes and religions has held together as a nation. But there is unacceptable corruption, limited press freedom and unrealistic restrictions on democracy - I want to help change all that. The Indonesian Army is not synonymous with President Suharto. It is loyal to its current political master, but it could have seized power often in the past 40 years. It is not, because the role of their armed forces is defined in law as

dual fungsi - a dual-function defence and socio-political role. It is respected for its "middle way" by political parties and by the pro-democracy movement. There should be no excuses for Suharto's regime. It should abide by the rule of law, and so should we. Smashing up other people's property is negative and self-indulgent. Why not divert that energy and enterprise into action to improve the situation in Indonesia? Yours sincerely, Robert Key MP

more missiles and cluster bombs on the people of East Timor and they have thanked us for this. What they cannot understand is why four ordinary women had to do it and why the British police or Attorney General did not ensure compliance with the arms export guidelines, the UN resolutions and international law. If our democratic and legal institutions worked properly the British government would be prosecuted for supplying weapons to Suharto. How can you justify support for this arms trade? Yours sincerely, Angie Zelter

pression. I believe the desire for democracy always defeats dictatorship and repression. What about South Africa? Megawati Sukarnoputri, the Indonesian opposition leader, said only month ago that the armed forces must continue to play a central role in politics. She explained: "They come from the grass roots. They are part of the soul of the country." If you really think our democratic and legal institutions are not functioning properly, why don't you or one of the groups for which you lobby take the Government to court? Or is it that everyone is out of step except you? Yours reasonably, Robert Key

Dear Robert, THERE are witness statements and photographs of British equipment being used. These have been presented by East Timorese survivors to BAE and to the British government. We will be using these as evidence in our prosecution against BAE and the DTI for murder. We are inviting thousands of citizens to join us in this private prosecution. Export guidelines state that weapons should not be supplied to countries engaged in major human rights abuses, the Scott Report is a damning indictment of the licensing regulations. You are right to say that eyes might well be opened by a look at British best practice! Britain was the centre of the international slave trade, started the drug trade with the Opium Wars in China, developed the concentration camps in the Boer War, violently colonised vast areas of the planet and has exported the "experience" of Northern Ireland as repressive "anti-terrorist" legislation to numerous regimes who use it to stomp democracy breaking out. Our present defence policy, based on threats to use nuclear weapons to control other people's resources, is hardly an inspiring example and was found to be totally illegal by the World Court in the Hague on July 8.

Are you really suggesting that Britain should support oppression so that democracy can flourish? I doubt that the BAE-sponsored universities in East Asia will include courses in history, law and ethics. Yours in peace, Angie Zelter

Dear Angie, THANK YOU for your separate letter. The answer to your only question is no. I am genuinely sorry your outlook is so warped. Perhaps not surprising given your interpretation of history and your crazy description of UK defence policy. Your comments on the Hague case last July are bizarre and wrong. The court concluded that there is in international law no comprehensive and universal prohibition of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. The UK's stance is exclusively defensive. Your colleague, Andrea Needham, has written, "Labour has been as bad as the Tories". How depressing for you! Please don't give up on the human race - especially tolerant Britain. The arms trade is justified by Article 51 of the UN Charter - the right of all states to self-defence. Excessive military spending is one of the factors which decides allocation of our aid - which for Indonesia runs this year at \$51 million. You appear to believe that even in a liberal democracy such as ours, the ends justify the means. As the tragic peoples of East Timor might warn you, that justification has been used by tyrants down the ages. Yours confidently, Robert Key

WE HAVE to be careful that we don't get stampeded by headline writers and editors of broadcast bulletins into accepting the view that no MP or member of the party can ever say anything original again. I joined the Labour Party because it's a democratic party and in a democratic society you can't have a party like Labour behaving by standards of democracy that are any less than we offer to people outside it. Robin Cook, interviewed by the New Statesman.

QUESTION: Which of the following groups do you think could also do with this warning? a) The strings of the Rotterdam Philharmonic. b) Labour's spin doctors. c) The Federation of Masters. d) The Tory Lobby and District Gardener's Forum. e) Those who give Labour's spin doctors their instructions. CITE: The letters designating the two correct answers form an English verb, having to do with existence.

SMALLWEED plans to spend most of this weekend trying to decide how exactly the Romans played the board game newly dug up by the Colchester Roman Excavations. This will be all the more difficult given the disparate versions in different newspapers. The Guardian has 11 counters on one side and 10 on the other, which worries the Trust's director. Veterans of the game, however, could tell him that contests between a team of 11 and a team of 10 - or even a team of seven - are by no means unusual. They reflect the fact that somebody's bus was late, or someone else dropped the car keys down the back of the fridge. Alternatively, the game may have been comparable to league football in Britain. The fact that one side has only 10 men means that one, probably someone named after Vincent Jones, has been swapped off.

The Telegraph has 12 white and 12 blue glass pieces, while the Times portrays a board on which each side has 10 - though its picture seems to have been devised before the Trust found the 21st piece. I think I might do better sticking to Ludo (which may be Roman too, since Ludo, I remember, is the Latin word meaning "to play").

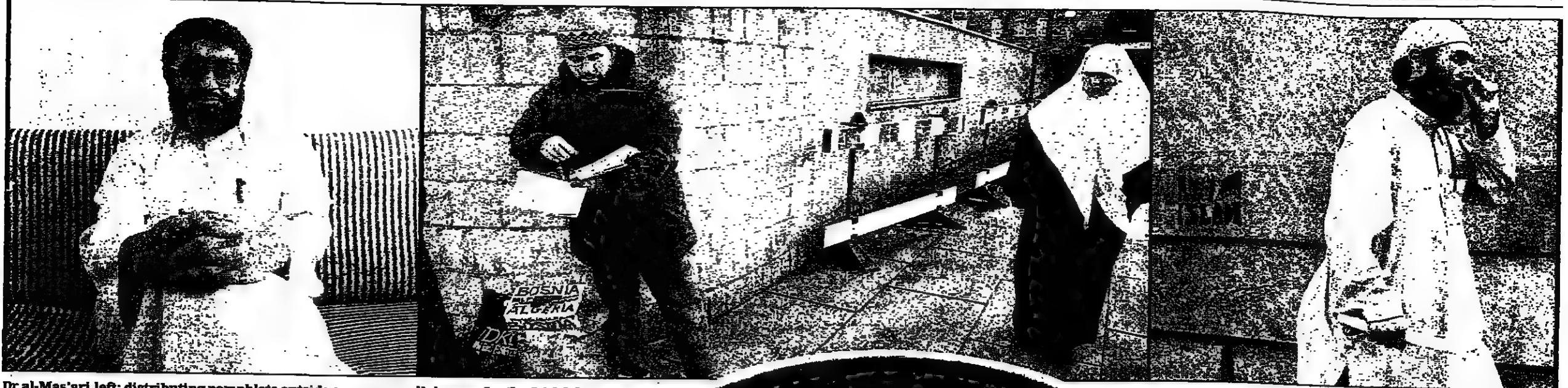
ON BALANCE, an asset - though she might have been more of one if she had been born less bright. - Daily Telegraph. The writer compares and contrasts Cherie Blair with Norma Major.

IN A FURTHER severe rebuke for the late Alexander Pope, who dispersed money in lines in poetry, a reader has sent me these lines by Michael Drayton, published in 1618: "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part; Nay, I have done, you get no more of me; And I am glad, you girls will love my heart; That thus so cleanly I myself can free" - 33 successive monosyllables. And the 1966 edition of Pegasus, the journal of the Exeter University department of classics and ancient history, contains a piece by Fulcrantius Falcala, possibly a pseudonym, which quotes a speech from the last act of Othello ("It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul") which also has 33 successive monosyllables. Better still, FF draws attention to an exchange in Macaulay's Horatius between the hero and a consul, in which 70 out of 75 words are monosyllables. It is wonderfully stirring stuff, completely confuting the view of silly old Alexander that monosyllables breed boredom. A shame the conversation involved the consul, holder of a disyllabic office, rather than, say, athane.

"The man is a national treasure" (What Doctors Don't Tell You) IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME? Helpful Advice From Dr Vernon Coleman If you suffer from Irritable Bowel Syndrome you will know only too well how this painful disorder can ruin your life. I used to suffer terribly from IBS, and had all the usual symptoms (pain, wind etc) but conquered the problem using a simple, two-step control programme. Since then my symptoms have virtually disappeared and the quality of my life has improved beyond measure. Now you can share the information that gave me back a normal life. I have produced a book called "Relief from IBS" that explains the methods I used to solve my IBS problem. The advice is written in an easy-to-follow style and includes a series of simple, practical guidelines designed to help you deal with your IBS in the same way that I dealt with mine. The topics covered include: Causes and symptoms • How to look after your digestive system • Relief from wind • Tips on how to cope with stress • Foods that can make things worse Having suffered from IBS for several years I know what a devastating effect it can have on your life and I do hope my book will be able to help you. You can try my advice without risk - if you don't find the book helpful then simply return it to me within 28 days of receipt for a full refund. As a bonus we will also send you a valuable FREE book worth £9.95 when you order. The contents of your free book include: "Should you get a second opinion?", "How to get the best out of your doctor", "How to cope in an emergency", "How to live to be 100", "Improve your life by changing your diet", "How to protect yourself against viruses" and much, much more! To order your copy of my book Relief from IBS send a cheque or postal order (payable to Publishing House) for £9.95 to IBS Book Offer, Sales Office GU72, Publishing House, Trinity Place, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 9HL. Post and packing is FREE! For credit card sales please ring (01271) 328892. Your book will be sent to you within 28 days. Reading this book could help solve your IBS problem for good - and remember, you have nothing to lose but your symptoms. Your free book is yours to keep whatever you decide. "His advice is optimistic and enthusiastic" (The British Medical Journal) "Dr Vernon Coleman is one of our most enlightened, trenchant and sensible dispensers of medical advice" (The Observer) Published by the European Medical Journal

Doonesbury Flashbacks BY GARRY TRUDEAU OH, NO! WHAT'S THAT RINGING, MARY? THAT'S A MAKE-UP CALL, MARY FOR AN ENTIRE GENERATION! IT'S TELLING US WE HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF MARY - THAT MOTHER SUCK-WALL-BLOWING THE TEEN PLATE FOR ALL THAT FOLLOWS! FAROUT! WHAT ARE YOU, MARY, SOME KIND OF MESSIAH? NO, NO, I'M JUST AN ORDINARY MOTHER, SENT BACK FROM THE FUTURE. ZONKER? PHONE! BY THE WAY, THE BEATLES ARE BREAKING UP NEXT YEAR!

John, no! It's



Dr al-Mas'ari, left, distributing pamphlets outside a mosque; rallying cry for the faithful
PHOTOGRAPHS: GRAHAM TURNER, SEAN SMITH, DAVID GIBSON. Main photograph by DAVID SALLITOE

Halfway house for the hopeful

THE WORLD'S first Islamic cyber-revolutionary, Dr Mohamed al-Mas'ari, has chosen an unlikely base for his international campaign to topple the increasingly fragile edifice of the Royal House of Saudi. The beauty of cyberspace, however, is that location matters far less than the quality of the telephone lines — even quiet, pedestrian London NW10 has no shortage of these. Its quiet streets of 1930s houses, with their middle-class Indian, Afro-Caribbean and Jewish communities, have few claims to fame. But now, events in at least one residence are watched avidly by virtually every player in the Middle East from the CIA and MI6 to the Saudi Arabian embassy and the Foreign Office. From his Willesden address, al-Mas'ari runs his campaign through telephone calls, faxes and e-mail — he also has a site on the Internet's World Wide Web — to remove the monarchy from power in Saudi Arabia and replace it with an Islamic democracy, a moveable feast of a political concept.

Al-Mas'ari is the best known of the international Islamic dissidents who have made their home in London. Thousands of Islamists were expected at an International Islamic Conference in London tomorrow, until the venue's management decided yesterday to call off the rally. The move followed a strongly worded warning from the Home Office to the organisers that any statements made in support of terrorism would not be tolerated. The Government has been under intense pressure from countries including Egypt and Algeria to ban the conference.

Now Islam is enjoying an intellectual renaissance he says. It is those scholars and clergy who are not overloaded with historic rubble of old ideas who have sharpened their analytical tools and studied physics, mathematics. They are not accepting change and improvements.

Two major international Arabic language newspapers, Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat (Middle East) and Al-Hayat (Life), are published in London and the city is also home to an Arabic satellite television station and, of course, the BBC Arabic service, respected across the Middle East for its impartiality and accuracy. The English-Islamic media are extending also to Pakistan, with the Urdu language newspaper Jang and the English language The News, both published in London and Pakistan.

Many exiled Muslim dissidents take ready advantage of British freedoms that they would never allow their own citizens, should they ever come to power. Every major and most minor opposition groups have a presence in London. They include: Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front; the Palestinian Hamas; the Tunisian An-Nahda (renaissance) movement; the secular Iraqi opposition organisations such as the Free Iraqi Council and even Pakistan's Mohajir

Quami Movement, based in north London's Muswell Hill. Most of these are banned in their mother country and the presence of so many Muslim revolutionary organisations has even prompted talk of London being the base for a new "Fundamentalist International", a sort of Muslim Comintern, where Islamic revolutions are planned and emissaries despatched with secret orders. These organisations are tolerated for several reasons — although many in the Home Office and the Foreign Office would like to see them expelled because of the difficulties they can cause to Britain's domestic security and the way they disrupt trade and diplomacy with the Arab world. To change the laws and outlaw political activity would be a legal quagmire, because there is still a tradition in Britain of giving asylum to foreigners seen as trouble-makers at home.

A few miles from the CDLR's headquarters, in Holborn, central London, are the offices of the Saudi-supported Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat, one of the Arab world's most important newspapers, whose pages are a forum for debate on almost every issue affecting the future of the Middle East, except anything critical of the House of Saud. A picture of a smiling Queen Elizabeth greeting the Saudi King Fahd is proudly displayed in the foyer, a pictorial remnant of Britain's long ties to the Arabian Gulf. Britain still has a special place in the Muslim world, says Ayad Abu Shakra, a senior editor. "As a power in Asia and Africa, Britain interacted with the Muslim communities and with the intellectual trends in the Muslim world. You cannot underestimate the influence Britain had on the Indian sub-continent. In the first world war, the British promoted the idea of Arab nationalism among Arabs that 'you are Arabs, why should you obey a Turkish sultan, he is not a Muslim sultan, he is a Turkish sultan'. It created a legacy of goodwill until 1948, when the state of Israel was created."



London may be an unlikely place for an Islamic revolution. But, says Adam LeBor, it is fast becoming the Middle East's intellectual capital

Arabs say it is more productive to meet here than in Cairo, Amman or Tel-Aviv. For Palestinian intellectuals such as Dr Ahmad Khalidi, born in Beirut in 1948 and a scion of an ancient Jerusalemite family, London is where Israeli and Arab could talk freely, a place where the many currents of contemporary Arab thought meet and coalesce. "In many cases, the Arab world is not really conducive to serious thought. If you think of yourself as a free thinker, and you want to practice what you preach or write what you believe, it's much easier here. The atmosphere in much of the Islamic world today and in the recent past is not only repressive, but pretty much closed."

Not every import is welcome though — such as the two bombs in the summer of 1994 that exploded outside the Israeli embassy and a Jewish organisation. For Middle East expert Hazihr Temourian, an Iranian Kurdish exile now living in London, the increasing Saudi dominance of the Arabic-language international media, and the presence of so many Arab journalists, is not healthy for Britain.

As a journalist and self-described "semi-academic", Abu Shakra represents a different breed of Arab intellectual to al-Mas'ari, still Muslim of course, by birth, culture and belief, but tending more to modern secularism, than Islamic revivalism. "You cannot simplify Islam, just as you cannot simplify Christianity. You cannot say that Christianity is the brand that I define as Christianity. Christianity for a monk on Mt Athos in Greece is his brand, but if you go to the Bible belt in America, it is about baptism. Islam is a world culture, it is a huge culture, a global religion and it can encompass many trends. I don't believe

Yet while Khalidi, who married into a Scottish family, is well assimilated into London life, he points out many Arab visitors and residents stay within their own business and social communities. "In England a foreigner is foreigner, very clearly, unlike the United States where everybody is different. Culturally, I consider myself a Muslim and if you ask me I would say I am a Muslim but I haven't made very strong or conscious efforts to convince my children to be Muslim. I haven't encountered much racism, or come across overt racism. The other day I was in a cab and I was giving the driver directions. When I got to the door he said: 'It's good to hear an Englishman speak with such perfect diction'. I just smiled to myself."

Which is, of course, a perfectly English reaction. This article is an extract from A Heart Turned East by Adam LeBor, to be published by Little, Brown next spring. Copyright © Adam LeBor, 1996

Any road up, life's a party

Julia Langdon on the promise of Blair's pint

THE Coronation Street set in Granada's television studios has a particular importance in the electoral cycle of modern British politics which has not, perhaps, previously been recorded. It is the backdrop for the political equivalent of the first cuckoo of Spring.

For the first sighting of a politician dropping in for a pint at the Rover's Return is a certain promise that a general election is imminent. It should serve as a warning to all C2 socio-economic group voters that a campaign for their support is under way.

This year, the portents occurred a little late. As those interested in the politics of either Coronation Street or Britain will already be aware, the next election campaign has been under way for some time — the BBC even had their full-scale dress-rehearsal months ago. Although that was because the fragility of the Government's position in Parliament and the volatile political atmosphere has meant that for much of this year there has been real possibility of an election any time.

The Prime Minister's known impatience with his own bicentennial backbenchers also led many to believe he would not want to allow Parliament to run its full course until next

May — or, as Paddy Ashdown was privately putting it: "To go through another winter with this bloody lot". So the clanking of the election machinery has been audible since spring, the electorate are already displaying signs of unrest at what lies ahead and we seem to be faced with permanent electioneering for another nine months. Most mothers regard the normal period of gestation as the longest nine months of their lives; the next nine months may possibly test us all.

The appearance in Manchester's Quay Street of Tony Blair, preceded by his broadest smile, was merely a confirmation of the opening of the next phase of more intense public activity by the political heavyweights. And if there had been any doubt, it would have been dispelled by the events of the seven days since.



become known as the War of the Wives. The announcement that Norman Major will in future play a more prominent role in the Prime Minister's campaigning was immediately turned into a full-scale press spectacular on the differing and developing styles of Norman and Cherie Booth with endless potential spin-off articles (with accompanying illustrations) about careers versus carers. While Cherie was no doubt gritting her teeth with fury in court at all the frivolous discus-

sion of frocks, one can only imagine the joy in the publicity department of the publishing house which is bringing out Norma's book about Chequers next week.

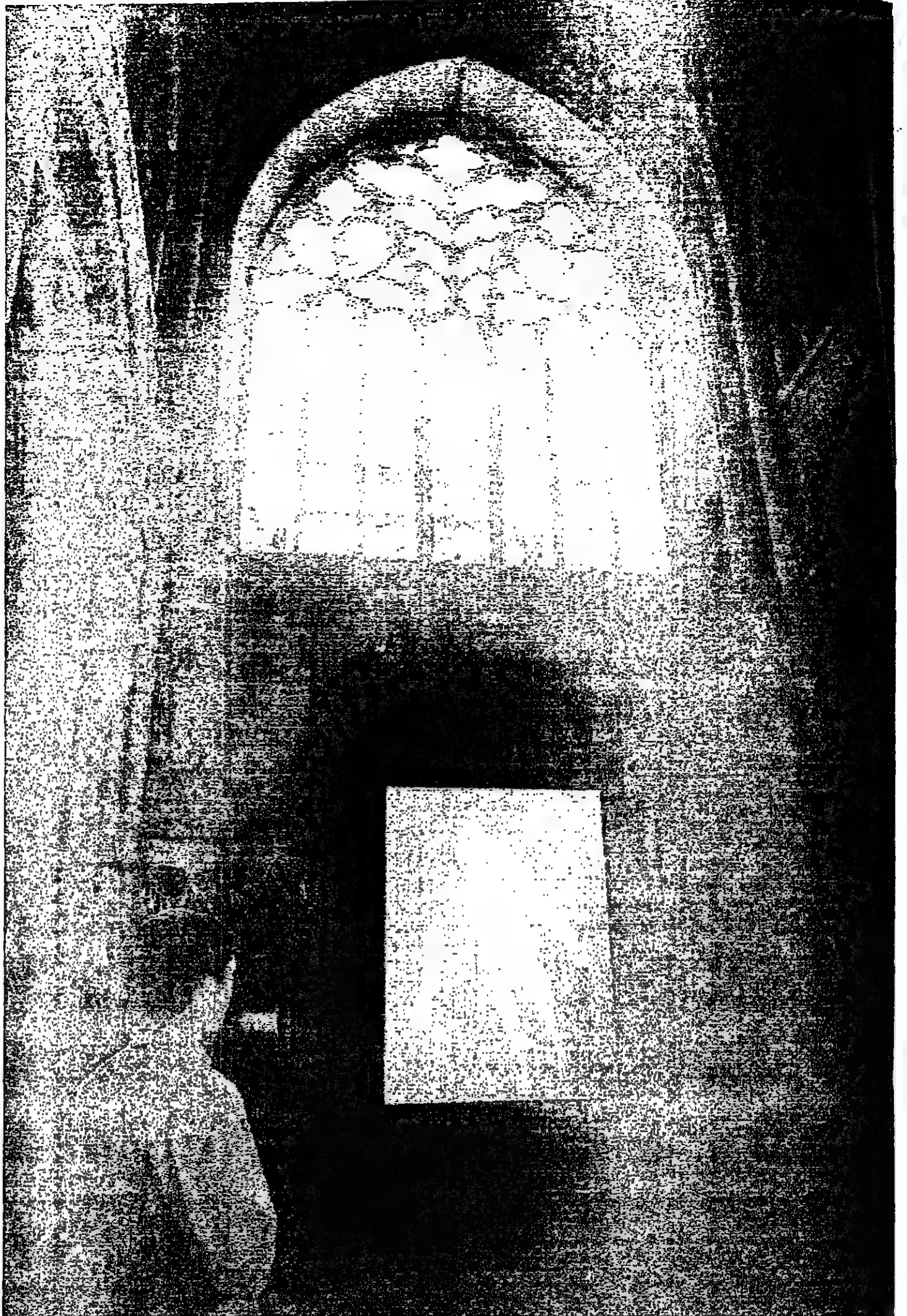
The Conservatives can only hope to benefit as a result of the delay in the date of the election. The polls are already beginning to demonstrate this. There has been a trickling back of Tory middle class support as the progress out of recession proceeds and the property market picks up. Labour's internal wrangling has had some impact on Tony Blair's impressive personal poll standing, according to yesterday's Gallup findings. And there is accumulating evidence of the "soft" nature of much of the huge Labour lead — which is a surprise to no one, including the Labour Party.

Even so, according to the current figures it still looks as if it would need a full-scale civil war to break out in the Labour Party and the date of the election to be put back until 1998 to allow the Conservatives to recover sufficiently to be in with a chance.

arts

Durham's revelation

Bill Viola, the world's best known video installation artist, was commissioned to create a work for Durham Cathedral, and this week presented them with a naked man in a tank. For four days, a team of clerics, artists and technicians struggled to put the work together. Andrew O'Hagan joined them. This is his diary



Viola's The Messenger... The Dean feels it would be better to put screens round the work in the daytime PHOTOGRAPH BY STEWART BONNEY

FIRST DAY Churches and art are inseparable I suppose. On the train to Durham I read a sermon spoken in the Cathedral at the end of the last century by somebody called William Alexander, the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. It had all the undiluted piety and certitude of one bound to the promise of a better world than this. "If the Cross is viewed by St Matthew as Prophecy realised," he said, "by St Mark as strength, by St John as Truth, by St Luke it is regarded as Beauty. It is the Gospel which has supplied painters and poets with their choicest materials. You can only wonder what the Evangelists would make of video installations originated in Los Angeles by someone holding a candle for Eastern mysticism. But they would probably be quite cool about it: authors are seldom as fanatical as the people who read their books.

Inside the cathedral it was all go. A metal rigging was being put up behind the font. On top of that there would be a high-beam video projector; the image would fall on a screen to be erected on the Great Western Door. "Looks like that 17th-century water font won't see out the weekend," said Alan, the game-for-a-laugh press agent for the area's Year of Visual Arts. Felicity Sparrow, the project manager, is one of those decent sorts who illuminate the day. She has that crazy-making talent for being efficient and funny at the same time. She is signing a receipt when I first see her. "More bureaucracy than you'll ever see," she says, "absolutely everything in triplicate." Bill Viola is due to arrive on day two, so technical preparations are being made by Claire Johnstone, his assistant from California, who is an artist herself. Claire's voice is sonorous and funky; every statement a question, every gesture a moment in classical opera.

The installation will involve a video image of a man coming up from the bottom of a pool, breaking the surface, taking breath, and descending again into the depths. As he comes and goes, the shape of his body is liquefied and his form takes on a different character. Claire and the technicians are keen to get all the details perfect, but there are "aesthetic" decisions which must wait for Bill Viola. Claire tells me the art runs from an explosive-resistant metal box; a video monitor, a laser disc player, a power unit, an amplifier. As the riggers fix the final screws, she shows me the visual on the monitor. It looks like something special. She gestures to the sinking man. "He's a champion scuba diver," she says, "he can hold his breath for four minutes."

"Claire," I say, gathering strength, "what has happened to his willy?" "It's not right," she replies, "well, I think it's a shame. It's not my... Bill felt that it would be right to do it this way." "But it's terrible," I say, "there's a little fuzzy patch following him around, covering up his willy." "Of course," she says, "I mean yeah, I think it's much more offensive than seeing his penis." "He's not coming under pressure to..." "No, I don't think so," she says, "I don't think he was pressured at all. I just think he thought it might not be best for the public to see this two-foot penis." We continue staring at the monitor for a second. "No, no" says Claire, cracking up, "no, I mean up on the screen, you know, up there it would be two foot long." A cherry-picker is lifting gear on to the top of the rigging. Andy the video technician tells me the projector is worth £50,000. Claire talks to Bill Viola on the

phone about what to do with this and that problem. The Verger stands on the other side of the security rope, peering into this garden of earthly delights.

SECOND DAY There is an exchange between two men coming in the door of the cathedral this morning. One said he had to get away to write something about "the battle of the organs". Some of us were left wondering just what he meant, in the light of present troubles.

Felicity is standing outside with a bag. "The willy problem was always my worst nightmare," she says. "My view is you're as well being hung for a sheep as a lamb. The right-wing press will go for it anyway." It turns out there is an uncensored version of the installation standing by but it needs the agreement first of the Chaplaincy to the Arts, who commissioned the work, and then the separate agreement of the Dean and Chapter of the cathedral itself. This is not going to be easy.

The First Verger is straight out of Frodo: nimbly and stooped and evasive. When I ask him a question he stiffly gives me the name of the PR company who represent the Cathedral. The Second Verger is altogether more human. He tells me the church can handle anything. He says the cathedral itself is a marvellous piece of Norman technology. "The fabric of this building was built between the 11th and 12th centuries," he says. "The interior is decorated and marked with the passing of time, and with the art of previous generations, but the original message of this place stands regardless of whatever else is happening. This is a living church." After this he takes me up to the very top of the cathedral. We go through a secret door into the bell chamber. There is a hole in the floor there, and when you put your eye to it, you look through a vast space, all the way down to tiny human figures going about their day.

A problem develops in the form of white flashes on the installation screen. The projected image is being interrupted with an "unwanted signal" says Tom, which caused them to request a new disk from America. There isn't much time. Tom and some others go off to Tyne Tees Television to check out the fault.

Bill Viola arrives with his wife and two children. He said later that he loved the way his kids ordered food in restaurants ("penne pasta with pesto please") and he obviously takes great delight in them. We discuss his work with no sense of the comedy (or anxiety) that surrounds the present attempts to mount it. "Gradually," he has said elsewhere, "more people are realising that the 20th century artist is not necessarily someone who draws well, but someone who thinks well." The Messenger at Durham is invested with a variety of thoughts, but he sees it as something which brings together a lot of what he had been doing. "The early years of video art were about learning to use the technology," he says. "I couldn't have attempted a piece like this 10 years ago." In his notebooks he has written that "technology always seems to lead us away from ourselves. The real work of the contemporary video artist, then, after acquiring the necessary technical skills, is in the development and understanding of the self."

It isn't long before Viola is on the willy jokes, though. "I'm sorry I took so long," he says after coming from a trip in search of a phone, "I was looking for a penis."

He jokes about the time he spent in the studio covering it up. "It's my first ever electronic fig leaf."

THIRD DAY I spent a while in the bath this morning, seeing how long I could stay under water. Not very long, certainly not long enough to beat the man on the screen.

The cathedral technicians put gels over the stained glass windows nearest to the installation; they reduce incoming light by about 30 per cent. They have borrowed gels from the set of the BBC children's programme Byker Grove, which is shot somewhere over in west Newcastle. Claire is painting the platforms that the speakers will stand on. I read Viola's original proposal for the installation, it describes the man coming out of water as "stirling, relieving and desperate". I wonder if it has something to do with death and resurrection. Paul Rubinstein from Durham City Council comes in. He was one of the prime movers (along with Bill Viola's original proposal for the installation) behind the scheme to bring this installation to the cathedral. "It's entirely appropriate," he tells me, "that first-rate work like this, by an internationally renowned artist, can find a home in this city. We managed to raise enough money to allow the work to be bought by the Chaplaincy to the Arts. It now belongs here." Viola sold them the work for \$30,000. As to the general nervousness being felt, Paul is quite adamant. "I think it is quite courageous that the cathedral should agree to accept a work that

they haven't seen," he says. "It is something they should celebrate."

They start up a test version of the installation. It really is stunning — a first-rate piece of work. When the man floats to the top, the sound of lapping water turns to a sort of roar as his head and chest emerge from the water, hungry for air. The whole thing is a light sculpture, full of depth and spirit and surprise. The man looks stunned, paralysed almost, as he bobs at the surface. Back underwater he bends like a mirage.

I go to sleep thinking about the amount of hope and fury invested in bits of art around these parts. Antony Gormley's Angel at Gateshead. The works in the sculpture park along the Tyne, in places that used to be rubbish tips. One of Viola's written notes comes into my head along with an image of his submerged man. "The regular rhythm of the live beating heart. The light of an object and its internal image. The sound of a tuned wire in vibration. The weight of a stone. The rejection in a bowl of clear water."

FOURTH DAY The last day before the opening, Bill Viola decides the rigging was wrong. It has to be moved about a foot further out on each side. There is a problem with this because the crew can't get the extra rigging required. The only stuff left in the area is being used by the Chippendales.

I look at the installation again. I wonder about its success, and think it must have something to do with the way it summons emotion. I think it's the most powerful thing

of its kind I've ever seen. It's just so right that it should be installed here. I come across something Viola said years ago. "I remember falling into a lake when I was 10," he said, "I almost died. The thing I remember is the imagery of this incredibly beautiful, serene blue-green world that I had no idea existed below the surface." I decide not to mention that to him.

Felicity tells me they'll have to make a decision about the willy.

'I'm sorry I took so long,' says Viola. 'I was looking for a penis'

She's quite upset at the idea that the French (where it will be shown next) will get the uncensored version. All of a sudden, what some have started calling the "French Version" appears on the screen. A group of decision makers and shakers huddle around each other. Bill Viola says something about the nature of church art.

The fully naked man starts floating on the screen without trouble or care. "I think it's great," says an elderly lady standing with her sister-in-law by the font. "It's so beautiful, kind of peaceful. It will be controversial, mind you, but I'll tell you something — if they showed more of that we'd be in here more often." And with that

they float away on a tide of giggles. Bill Viola comes back from his meeting to tell us the naked version has won the day. "It was a lively discussion," he says, "but reason won out in the end. I can well understand why people would be nervous. This is their place after all. The crew will now busy themselves altering rigging and putting the last thing in place before the opening party."

A certain member of the clergy stops worrying over this excellent innovation at Durham Cathedral just long enough to offer me a word from Job. The one about naked you came into this world and naked you shall return. Well, that is fair enough. But it's also good to know that many will come before this work with no particular dream to hang, and no great part of their mind closed to the elegance instilled in the image of that enigmatic Messenger. They might even think it important to stand up for this sort of thing, and stand against those who would oppose it. The whole thing cost \$198,000, of which less than half came from the National Lottery Fund. Well worth the bother I'd say.

A very late development. The Dean comes back from his holidays and gives his highly influential view. He is against covering the man's genitalia electronically, but feels it would be better, and more legal, to put screens around the work during the daytime. It is, of course, the Dean's opinion that matters. The Messenger, An installation by Bill Viola at Durham Cathedral, will run until 12 October.

SHOOTING STARS



UP... From the moment the stuttering 10-year-old Kemp realises his feet don't stammer, his destiny is never in doubt. A graduate of the Royal Ballet Upper School, he dances the role of Gypsy Lover in the school's end-of-year performance — Ashton's The Two Pigeons — and earmarks himself for greater things.

UP... This year — at the ripe old age of 19 — he completes his first choreographic work for the Royal Ballet Company, Zebra Crossing, for their gala performances in Kenya.

AND AWAY... In his first year in the dazzling Adventures in Motion Pictures' Swan Lake, the wunderkind Kemp takes minor roles. This week, he dances the part of the Swan in Swan Lake as understudy to Adam Cooper.



GOING... As big cheese of the BBC radio drama department, Tydeman handles 2,000 projects a year, including all the major Shakespearean tragedies with Nicol Williamson, Paul Scofield and Peggy Ashcroft. He becomes famous as mentor to Adrian Mole.

GOING... It's 1994, and after 30 glorious years at the Beeb, Tydeman steps down. Auntie is selling her soul to the market, and his job-title is now "business unit manager". That's BUM, in capitals. It's not me, he growls.

COME... Resurfaces next week as director of the thirties potboiler Night Must Fall at the Thordilke Theatre in Leatherhead, with Jason Donovan in the lead role.

Bring back Manning

Provocations

Tom Hutchinson

BLAME Bernard Manning — everyone does. For a funny thing happened to me on the way to The Happidrome, the place where old jokes go to die, and my conversion is as intense as if I had been on the road to Damascus. Manning appeared as a high vision of low comedy, and I saw him as worthy to be one of those laughing stocks who should have preservation orders slapped upon them. My liberal conscience with-

ered in the heat of the experience. As the recently rerun Michael Parkinson interview with the late Les Dawson reminded us about great comedy and BBC TV begins its autumn shows to reveal how decay humour has become, I've decided that Manning is one of the few who can still gut-punch audiences into belly-laughs. It's technique I'm talking here, not the racist, sexist schtick that makes Manning infamous. For the best comedians are fascist in their totalitarian command: that's Manning. I have watched him work. He relies solely on a gross tonnage of ineffectiveness to shock us into



laughter. As politically incorrect as a spoilt ballot paper, he breaks conventions as easily as wind. Yet he is a pitifully degraded member of an endangered species.

not, he is one with Frankie Howard, Les Dawson, Eric Morecambe, Tommy Cooper, Marti Caine, Frank Randle, Sandy Powell.

Last year I wrote a radio programme about Britain's laughter, which gathered aperçus such as Jim Davidson saying: "Sexism goes with the lifestyle of the North" and Sheffielder Marti Caine responding: "Adversity breeds humour." I realise now the message was that entertainers had lost touch with the working-class desperation that united us in a common lot; they had mislaid the paddle of comedy as we all went up the creek.

In the past, comedians bound up our wounds by making us laugh at hurt; now the unsmiling sniderness of Jack Dee or the liver-spittiness of Jo Brand hold sway

Their humour cares for nobody. In the days of Moss Empress, Frank Randle belched and farted across northern stages: "Does that belly rumble when the aies peas?" As an ancient yokel he would call women "tarts" and "hot uns". Then replace his dentures to sing Ave Maria. He was not facetiously smutty but honestly dirty.

As his biographer, Jeff Nuttall, said: "Frank was one of the greatest comedians ever to grace the British stage." The funny thing about what he did was to keep his trousers to cack in his trousers, to make us face the facts of life. Randle's style is not allowed these days. Telly-pervasive comedians gather us into an aloof conspiracy to sneer. Satire has a lot to answer for. But Dead Les is worth a mention.

live comedians. For when was the last time you fell from your seat laughing? I have done so at Dawson, at Howard, at Powell. But these were other voices, other music halls, other mothers-in-law.

Let us not forget these laughter-makers, though, even if Bernard Manning is among the last decayed and appalling remnants. Meanwhile, a duo-digital gesture to those who have forgotten that Rabelais is worth more than 1000 rules. The funny thing about what he did was to keep his trousers to cack in his trousers, to make us face the facts of life. Randle's style is not allowed these days. Telly-pervasive comedians gather us into an aloof conspiracy to sneer. Satire has a lot to answer for. But Dead Les is worth a mention.

مكزامن الامم

مكتبة الأصيل

CHANNEL SURFING STUART JEFFRIES

Shallow waters

TERUMI Matthews had everything. Gap between her front teeth. Elongated eyebrows. An inability to dance her way out of a paper bag. Perfect for the lead in Madonna: Innocence Lost (Sky Movies). There was only one problem, which the casting director should have addressed: "Terumi, sweetheart, this is supposed to be about Madonna's early years, catch my drift? Did Madonna really leave her Detroit home seeking fame, fortune and a complete make-over, aged 37? TV biopics about living stars often attend to the superficial and let the fundamentals take care of themselves. In last week's Roseanne And Tom: Behind The Scenes (Channel 4), the hairdressers worked overtime on her wigs. But when it came to casting, everyone overlooked the fact that Roseanne is not just fat, but savage wit is inscribed into her facial features. Fat may have been necessary, but it was not enough. This sloppiness is more bizarre given the pussyfooting scripts typical of the living-star biopic. In this sub-genre the impression is given that history isn't so much written by the winners, but by hack screenwriters and lawyers desperate not to provoke the movies' litigious subjects. Revelatory details are sanitised or exaggerated to conform with the celebrity's desired persona. In Roseanne And Tom, the reductive story was of a comedian triumphing over adversity (sexists, unreliable lovers, studio suits who wouldn't recognise a working-class sitcom if it bit their collective ass) which may have fitted Roseanne's self-image, but was chiefly designed not to offend its subject.

In Innocence Lost, Madonna was depicted as bawdy, ambitious, faithless to anything but her celebrity. She must have loved it. "You make love like a man," said one lover. "You're so aggressive." "Do you find that threatening?" "No, it's an incredible turn on!" Naturally, she ditched him in the next scene. All this fits so well with Madonna's image on the sex terrorist who detonates desires and leaves them begging for more — as to make its conformity with fact subsidiary. By contrast, in true-life movies, the facts fit the form. Only some biographies (dignity in the face of terminal illness, bizarre baby-swaps) merit the TV movie treatment, just as only certain crises can be served up à la Oprah. This week the Movie Channel offered object lessons in what passes for true life on cable: Snowbound: The Jim And Jennifer Stolpa Story (Alive without the cannibalism); Rise And Walk: The Dennis Byrd Story (athlete battles movingly against paralysis); Whose Child Is This? The Baby Jessica Story (real and foster parents fight for custody); Escape From Terror: The Teresa Stamper Story (domestic violence survivor drama). All too expensively, no one has taken up the option on Couch Potato: The Stuart Jeffries Story. More intriguing than the celebrity walk-on, rife this week. It falls into the following categories. 1: Just ill of me: Michelle Pfeiffer as herself in Muppets Tonight! (BBC1, see review below right) "Everybody thinks of me as some glamorous star, but really I'm just the simple girl next door." 2: Astute association with hip show: Mimi Rogers in The Larry Sanders Show (BBC2) in which the actress plays Larry's date (he wishes). 3: Irritating intertextual virtual walk-on: Jason Alexander (George in Seinfeld) was mentioned as a possible guest on Larry Sanders. 4: No really, I can act: Julia Roberts in this week's star-infested Friends (Channel 4) played, with her customary ineptitude for comedy or sexual allure, a woman bent on Chandler's sexual humiliation. 5: I'm still alive, guys: Brooke Shields in Friends played a celebrity stalker. Uncannily, she played the part so well that it may well help revive a flagging career. Perhaps she could star in Hair Apparent: The Jennifer Aniston Story.

Land of the rising fun

Brian Logan on two Midsummer Night's Dreams — one Japanese, the other, er, a Rave

The legend

PUCKS — five of them — backflip across turtle-head rocks on an island of white sand. Impish leers fixed to their faces like masks. A disembodied soprano haunts this Eastern oasis as ruby red lotus petals rain down and wispy figures with foliage erupting from their heads rotate and jerk like short-circuiting automata. Yukio Ninagawa — the legendary Japanese director who brought us a samurai Macbeth and a chariot-bound Medea — is back to share his Dream with us, at the Mermaid Theatre in London. One might have expected fireworks now Ninagawa is loose on the one classic that truly invites such experiment. There is no immediate indication of anything so explosive. The stage — a Japanese stone garden — bathes in dappled blue from the outset. Framed by black, pitched against an inky black backdrop, this is a rootless, timeless Elysium. It's calming — instant karma. The soundscapes soon scripted by the Japanese tongue bombard such peacefulness. It's an imperative sound — although for all I knew these voices are talking about the Kyoto TV schedules. Yet without familiar words to be led — or distracted — by one follows all the better the emotional and psychological ebbs and flows as this Dream unfolds. The mechanicals' scenes, for example, are Keystone Cops-style commotion. To a drone of street sounds, they gatecrash this place of spiritual retreat, some on bikes, some on mopeds. Bottom fries some Oriental nosh on a makeshift stove — in the kabuki tradition, smell is as important as spectacle or sound.



Bottom, thou art translated... Titania and her ass in Ninagawa's Dream

Most remarkable is a Snug of diminutive intellect and towering proportions, played by Sumo-wrestling superstar Ofuji — imagine Frank Bruno and Peter Brook in cahoots, and you've got the picture. Together, the mechanicals conjure up the evening's crowning moments: an arch-camp Pyramus

And Thisbe replete with Simon Bates's Our Tune mood-music, and a halcyon slow-motion reaction to Bottom's affliction — inch-by-inch hysteria and bumbling slapstick orchestrated by a cackling Puck. Japan: land of the rising fun. Its appearance signalled by sand cascading in spindly columns

from the sky, the fairy kingdom fares almost as well. The spritely pieces become song-and-dance moments of inexpressible beauty. The music — the best of a labor, the twang of a mandolin or the layered electronic sweep of the synthesizer — mingles traditional Oriental with hi-tech modern to

brilliantly atmospheric effect. Titania soon dispels such tenderness — she's got a voice like a scratched blackboard and a chalky-white face with such a capacity for grotesque and fantastical expression, it's refreshingly clear that she hauls from an acting tradition light-years from our own. That's a characteristic of the production: it's surprisingly unexperimental, but spellbindingly exotic. Light-years from that other Shakespeare that is being peddled over the river at the Globe.

AS IS another Dream, which has created a bit of a buzz at the Chelsea Centre on the King's Road. Picture Puck, sinewy and naked save for a mud-died pair of PVC trousers, his hair knotted, writhing across a spartan stage like a wounded animal. He rises to his feet, twitches, and laughs in a strangled twist. All the while the unrelenting rhythm of techno pounds around him and dreadlocked fairies rise.

Hopeful Monsters — a new company making their debut on the London stage — aim to invest Shakespeare with the dynamic of club culture. The hypnotic effect of the trance sound, says director Lucy Gordon-Clark, works like the "love-in-illness" drug on the mooning adolescents in the play — it manipulates and seduces. That music — a vibrantly distinctive feature of what would otherwise be a fairly staid Dream — was especially "sculpted" by James Monaco, director of Flying Rhino Records, DJ, and member of the dance music band Technosomy. The production, meanwhile, is sponsored by a band — the Shamen, who once spent a summer at number one telling us that "E's are good".

While its emphasis on mind-blowing and shape-shifting the Dream is a play with which the chemical generation should feel at home. The new-age, eco-conscious and disenfranchised world-view of modern youth should be saved by a spectacle in which no one exercises autonomy except mad fairies in a forest. In recognition of this kinship, Bottom and Titania trollope on stage in the finest gear the flea-market could muster.

But classical theatre remains stolidly un-reinvented. If the club vibe coursing through the speakers at the Chelsea Centre had been applied with conviction to the rest of this production, this Midsummer Night's Rave could have been quite special. Instead, it's standard stuff reasonably handled, with a few fire-fly sparks of magic and much that's pedestrian.

Back at The Mermaid, Puck has ridden the closing applause, and now presses himself against the sandy bed of the stone garden, listening impatiently at first. Then, emergent, we hear the sounds of urban life: the hum of chatter, traffic aggressing itself. The volume rises to a pitch and Puck cries out. The Dream — the show, the summer — is over: it's time to wake up. At the Mermaid until Sept 14 (0171-236 2211) and the Chelsea Centre until Sept 21 (0171-352 1867).

WAVE RIDING ANNE KARP

What the Dickens?

HERE'S a piece of information to improve your life. For relaxation, recreation and transportation from one's own world into another, there's little to match Dickens on radio. Currently, for one hour each week, Dombey And Son (Radio 4) will take you where no alcohol can, and where Bleak House, Oliver Twist and countless previous BBC Radio Dickens have taken me before. The pleasure is especially great if it's a Dickens you haven't read. Of course you know that you're losing density and complexity, but Dickens by radio is still stuffed with narrative richness. Episode one of Dombey And Son has seen off Fanny, wife of the patriarchal ship-owner Dombey, after she produced his longest-for-son, Paul, and after a splendid set-piece in which Dombey's sister (one of Dickens's grotesques) has tried to bully her into activity in the belief that she's exhibiting postnatal malingering, rather than that other condition known as dying. We've had the recruitment of a wet-nurse, required to relinquish all contact with her own family and, like a black slave, to be forcibly renamed. And we've heard the abduction of Dombey's first and neglected female child, Florence, by the menacing Mrs Brown (terrifically played by Avril Elgar), and her eventual return home. Some of the time, here, Dickens sounds a little like a Victorian Penelope Leach: one has to remind oneself that a modern adaptor (Michael Bakewell) has been foraging among the original, picking out passages which are flavoured

to a contemporary audience with liberal ideas on child-care. But Bakewell has also retained some fine satirical descriptions of class attitudes and social change, like the building of the railway, brought alive by the excellent Simon Russell-Bell as Dickens the narrator. I hate Morgan's well-judged production. Radio is the only medium other than the novel which can allow such a large role for narration, yet it can't be long now before Austen-addicted Hollywood discovers Dickens. And Steven Berkoff, that arch English movie baddie, will be in clover for life. Hot on the heels of Radio 4's first Asian stand-up comedy series comes its first Asian sitcom, Masala FM. Like Doon Your Way, it's set in a radio station (is this becoming the new, self-referential cliché of comic radio?) whose ratings-seeking Pory owner seeks to deflect our journalist hero from the sober, serious reporting she wants to do. Equal opportunities means equal rights to the flaccid conventions of the sitcom, and Masala FM comes festooned with implausibilities, coincidences and neat resolutions. But its author, Meera Syal, also has a fabulously sharp ear for the ironies of Anglo-Asian life, so there are lots of crisp, funny lines about everything from fashion (the latest Asian styles reveal "a daring expanse of trouser waistband") to cultural identity. In a second series of Speaking As An Expert (Radio 4), Laurie Taylor is indulging in the chameleon's ultimate fantasy — trying to pass in a chosen profession after less than a week of induction. In the first programme, Taylor attempted to become an angry performance poet. Nobby Taylor, John Hegley advised him to wear a cravat and be left-wing. A hilarious Arthur Smith counselled him to say "thank you" at the end so that the audience would know that he'd finished. One expected Taylor's final effort to satirise performance poetry so that he himself would escape being the butt of satire. But have-a-go Taylor couldn't resist doing it for real at the London Poetry Festival, though he applied to the punters rather than the angry. The punters judged him a success, and the series itself is a delightful little deflator of professional vanity. Next week: Taylor the cosmetics salesman.

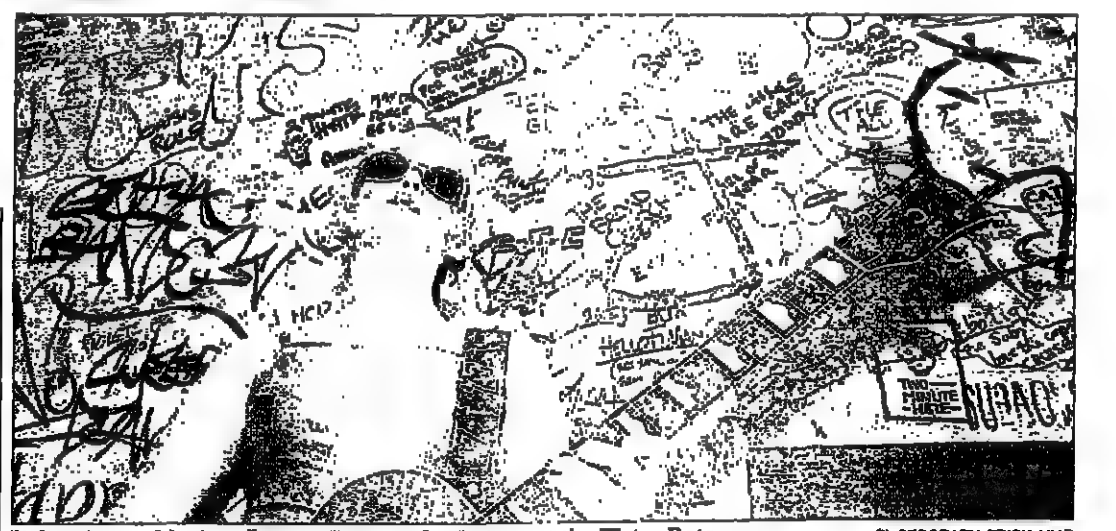
Garth Cartwright grudgingly admires Kenickie at the Water Rats, London

Teen dreams

The sensation

THE over-heated state of Britpop at the moment suggests that anyone young, pale and tawdrily moody is offered a recording contract. When Supergrass first played in London the time spent queuing to retrieve your coat from the cloakroom was longer than their entire performance. Ash's recent main stage debut at the Reading Festival demonstrated that these aspiring adolescent superstars have achieved platinum sales without yet mastering their instruments. Kenickie are the latest and youngest addition to the teenage rampage. Their London debut showed them to be as noisy and ambitious as the rest of the pack. Talent? Forget it, that's why recording companies employ producers. Youth and attitude are the essentials for Britpop and Kenickie have a surplus of both.

Most of the band are not yet old enough to buy a beer at the bar. Their line-up consists of three 16-year-old convent school graduates and a male drummer who, at 21, must feel personable. The name is taken from the timeless teen musical Grease — though three-quarters of the band weren't born when that came out. Signed to EMI/Disco, their single Punha has entered the charts at number 34 and, with an appearance on the Big Breakfast yesterday and a Radio 1 Evening Session next week, they are moving very rapidly indeed. Striding on stage to a capacity audience, the Sunderland sirens played with an audacity that belied their inexperience. With their rough harmonies, cheeky vocals and fuzz guitar, Kenickie could be the offspring of the Shangri-las and The Buzzcocks. What makes up for their lack of musical competence is their summation of the teenage experience



Talent is no object... Lauren Laverne backstage at the Water Rats

— with all the raging hormones, arrogance and gawkiness that implies. This is Bratpop, and its celebration of everything adolescent could lead Kenickie to a potentially huge audience. Vocalist Lauren Laverne leads the band focus with her broad chuckle and comic chiding. She demands applause from the (mainly male) audience after a

song finishes — and gets it: they respond with such enthusiasm that pogoing breaks out in front of the stage. The shared energy and excitement generated between band and audience are reminiscent of the heyday of punk. As are the band's criticism (one song is titled Kill Fantasy) and Laverne's way with a soundbite. She recently claimed that being in

a band was more worthwhile than finding a cure for cancer — which is the kind of thing that only the very young or the very stupid can set aside with. For now, Kenickie are very young and, with a host A-levels and a major recording deal, not so stupid. If they manage to land an audience before the Britpop bubble bursts, well, look up your sons.

Fiachra Gibbons explains how the Muppets changed the world

Miss Piggy, the martyr

The comeback

UNTIL she was revealed as victim of sexual stereotyping of the most swinish kind, I'd always put Miss Piggy down as a typical older sister chumping you in the shadows while coming over as sweet as syrup in front of the grown-ups. Unreliable memories. That's the danger of reviving childhood TV. Captain Scarlet is shown up as shallow and vain and Hugh, Fugh and Barney Mulgrew are not quite

the intellectual titans you had once thought. Watching Muppets Tonight! (BBC1) — resurrected after 15 years in the Howard Hughes Memorial Hollywood deep freeze — I now realise Miss Piggy was an early feminist martyr, a solitary woman surrounded by weak and mendacious males dead set on smothering her super nova to stardom. It's shameful also to realise how misplaced our sympathy for Kermit the Frog was. Anyone who took such trouble to repel a woman like Piggy must be con-

cealing something at the bottom of the pond. Yet the Muppets have emerged from the dry ice as cultural giants. As a kid, I never thought they were all that funny. So I didn't expect almost to wet myself laughing at their reincarnation. Now I realise most of it went whizzing over my head. Then it came to me — The Muppets Had Changed The World. These lumps of foam and fur are the Stealth bombers of satire. They set the template for today's culture of parody spoof and send-up. Jim Henson came to this coun-

try with his puppets in the seventies and returned to America with a deadly virus called pastiche which was to fester into David Letterman and Saturday Night Live. The virus ran riot through the iron-free heart of the epoch. There would never have been a Tarantino without Animal, nor a Raymond Blanc without Hurlerburdebur, the Swedish chef. Parody became reality. When the history of the final decades of the millennium are written, events will be weighed up on whether they were pre- or post-Muppet. The new Muppets Tonight! parodies its own offspring by being a send-up of Letterman and the Jay Leno Tonight shows. The jokes go on, the pasticheers pastiche themselves.

The Muppets get away with things no American comic could. Gonzo has walked straight out of the Low Grade Jewish-showbiz-schmoositz caricature; Clifford the new dog, the most famous of a West Indian "baby father", running a string of girlfriends; all the rats have New York accents. Bay of Pigs Watch, their send-up of Baywatch, is the sharpest yet. But their biggest in-joke is still their best — the celebratory speck has spread like scabies through TV and newspapers since they first sent it up 20 years ago. Of course no one outside the loop of American popular culture would get the Muppets. But then anyone who doesn't subscribe to US Culture Inc doesn't matter. That's something which still whizzes over a lot of heads.

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Soccer

Pleat cuts his cloth to suit the Wednesday

Michael Walker on the manager hoping to stay in top gear against Chelsea

DAVID PLEAT is a person of a specified level of skill. He must be because it says so in the dictionary. This particular definition is one of several of the "manager" and by way of explanation an example of common usage is helpfully added in brackets: (a good manager). Few would doubt that Pleat has earned his brackets.

Whenever Pleat's name crops up he is routinely referred to as a good manager and fans do not bestow this title lightly nor just upon those with silverware in the chairman's cabinet. Pleat is in that mould of manager such as Dario Gradi at Crewe, Joe Kinnear at Wimbledon and even Alex Ferguson when at Aberdeen — men who have achieved something big at somewhere small.

Pleat did that at Luton Town, where in a low-budget environment he took Luton into the top flight and kept them there, and he may be doing something significant now at Hillsborough.

Not that Sheffield Wednesday are a small club, for they are reasonably big, especially when compared to Luton, but not many expected Chelsea to arrive at Hillsborough today to face a side with the record: played four, won four.

Yet that is the case and Pleat is once again Manager of the Month. It is recognition he has not received for a decade, since his Tottenham side of Glenn Hoddle, Chris Waddle and the 49-goal Clive Allen went top of the league after three games, eventually finished third and reached the 1987 FA Cup final.

The return of the spotlight is pleasing Pleat — "Belgian TV were here," he said yesterday. But Pleat knows more

than anyone that praise offers no security. Despite that successful start at Spurs Pleat was out after one season following unproven accusations of kerf crawling.

"I wouldn't mind if it were all true," he has said of the allegations. "Then I might understand what happened. But there was no proof, nothing factual whatever, yet mud sticks."

After that there was a possibility of a job in Greece with Olympiakos but Pleat instead found rehabilitation with Leicester City. However, in four seasons at Filbert Street he failed to repeat the promotion feat and five years ago, at the age of 46, Pleat was back where his playing days had ended and his management career had begun — Kenilworth Road.

After White Hart Lane it was relative obscurity perhaps, but within three seasons Pleat had blended another swift side that surprised more than West Ham and Newcastle on the way to the Cup semi-final.

Pleat was up against today's opponents Chelsea and their manager by then, Hoddle. Luton lost 2-0 but afterwards Pleat was positively glowing in the renewed limelight. "It's nice to be back here," he said to the scores of reporters. "It's nice to have had the attention again."

It was a smaller press gathering (five) that greeted Pleat in Sheffield yesterday, a turnout that suggested the country has yet to take Wednesday's rise seriously. Pleat played down any talk of raised expectation. "If there is on the outside, then I don't feel it because I'm cocooned in here but it's nice that we've started well."

They have been useful scalpies too. Aston Villa and Leicester at home, Leeds and Newcastle away. "I didn't say we were confident about the first four," he said, quietly confident. "But for better or worse we've got a marriage."

The manager was pointing to the new harmony within the club after a "quite traumatic" end to last season, when Wednesday went into the last game at West Ham with relegation still a possibility. They drew 1-1.

The previous match had been a 5-2 home defeat by Everton. "I've never known a dressing room like it. They didn't seem concerned."

The summer needed and brought changes, mainly behind the scenes. Six back-room staff left, three to join Trevor Francis at Birmingham, others elsewhere, and



First among equals... David Pleat has masterminded four victories to put Wednesday in pole position. SIMON WILKINSON

pleat recruited people he knew. Silky Ricky Hill is now responsible for the youth team and Peter Shreeves, another former Spurs manager, is in as coach.

Of last season's atmosphere Pleat said: "If we can't get on with each other, then it's hard on the pitch. We're closer now; there have been changes. If you look at good club managers such as Graham Taylor or Brian Little, they take all their staff with them to a new club. Some clubs won't let you do that."

Pleat seems mightily relieved to be in full control of the pitch so that he and Shreeves can fully concentrate on matters on it. Playing personnel have also been changed and Scott Oakes, Wayne Collins, Andy Booth, Ritchie Humphreys — "I knew he was a good player last season" — and Regi Blinker have all made an impact in a harder-working Wednesday team.

It is first versus third this afternoon but Shreeves, released by Chelsea during

the summer, is well up on the Londoners. "Obviously their tactical formation is one I know well, having laid the foundations of that at the club. It will be a big test for us."

Pleat agreed and added: "We've coped with every game so far and in eight halves of football we've had four decent ones where we've battled, looked resilient. There is a danger that people could under-estimate us because we have other qualities." The good manager will show those later.

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The Arsenal Stadium Mystery

Soccer Diary

Martin Thorpe

ARSENAL are so worried about upsetting Grampus 8 by publicly admitting that Arsene Wenger has agreed to join them while he is still under contract in Japan that the Frenchman has become a non-person at Highbury. The name Wenger is conspicuous by its absence from the match programme, club magazine or official quotes. He is referred to only as "the new manager".

The clampdown follows recent lapses by Arsenal officials who have admitted that Wenger is "the new manager". This despite yesterday's admission by Wenger himself that "I want to be free from my contract sooner or later but, as I understand it, Grampus 8 have not got a replacement for me".

While they wait, perhaps Arsenal should set up a live video link between Japan and the Highbury dressing-room and dug-out so "the new manager" can take team talks and make substitutions in games. But only if he wore a mask and was referred to as Mr X.

DWIGHT YORKE has inadvertently discovered a miracle cure for hamstring injuries. Aston Villa were angry when Trinidad and Tobago insisted on the player travelling to a recent international even though the injury meant he could not play. Yorke was even due to miss Villa's next game at Everton. But Yorke returned from the Caribbean completely recovered and is telling other injured players that the best hamstring cure is a week in Trinidad. Doug Ellis may not be convinced.

"The biggest lesson I learned last season," said Matthew this week, "is that if I don't do it week in week out for my club, I won't get picked for my country. It really is as simple as that." Is this why they call him a genius?

HAVING sold Shearer, Blackburn do not have their SAS any more. But Bradford City do — Marco Sas, a defender signed from Breda in Holland.

YES, it is crude and in bad taste but an anagram of David Ginola is vagina dildo.

GRAEME DARLING is a Newcastle fan and manager of a local garden centre. He has a theory. It would be a great idea to sell Maggie pannies — three black, three white. Until last week when a Sunderland fan came in and suggested that Maggie pannies seemed pretty apt given Newcastle's start to the season. So imagine Graeme's elation at Newcastle's midweek win over their big rivals. Now he is waiting for the Sunderland fan to come in again so he can tell him all about a miracle cure for weeds.

LAST season Manchester City fans were handed a song-sheet produced by Oasis containing alternative lyrics to Wonderwall, including the chorus: "And after all we've got Alan Ball." Paul Edwards of Darlington reckons Oasis should now re-write the words to Champagne Supernova: "Slowly leaving down the hall, faster than an Alan Ball."

STRANGE but cruel: an anagram of Ray Wilkins — Is a Wrinkly.

GETTING ready for the 2002 World Cup? Then you might need these football phrases which appear in the Japan World Cup Web Site. Or not. "Kon-niwa" it says is "Hello". "Kittpa itimal kudasa!" it says is "please give me a piece of dick". "Yatta" is "He did it!" "Taka-aga!" "He is not a man." "Si-ni-ma!" is "Kill him". "K*****" is "son of the bitch" and "haitu-taaaaa" is "Goooooal!" (Arigatou to John Wright of London).

Scottish preview

Smith calls for brave reserves

Patrick Glenn

IT IS difficult to escape the feeling that the Old Firm have transformed the Premier Division into a kind of alternative snooker tournament. There is simultaneous play on two tables but Rangers and Celtic are already contesting the final on one while the rest vie for the minor places on the other.

Tommy Craig, the assistant manager of Aberdeen, said at the beginning of last season that the Dons would have to forget about Rangers and "concentrate on winning our own league, which is separate from theirs".

Celtic's re-emergence has given Rangers more of a contest since but the other eight seem likely to be as irrelevant as they have for a decade.

Rangers, who visit unbeaten Motherwell today, have delivered some unconvincing performances already — especially in the immediate aftermath of European matches — but they have not been given sufficient credit for their ability to overcome bad days and win.

"They sit at the top with three straight wins after Celtic faltered on the opening

day, drawing 2-2 at Aberdeen. Walter Smith, the Ibrox Park club's manager, is again having to call upon the resilience of his squad. The captain Richard Gough seems likely to miss today's match because of a damaged eye. Yesterday he looked as though he had been knocked around a boxing ring.

With two other first-choice defenders, Alan McLaren and David Robertson, missing since the start of the campaign, Smith has had to rely on the character of others. He has yet to be disappointed.

Others who were left out of Wednesday's Coca-Cola Cup 3-1 win over Ayr United — Ally McCoist, Brian Laudrup and Stuart McCall — will be reinstated.

Celtic entertain Hibernian with Alan Stubbs, the £3.5 million defender from Bolton, making his home debut. There is, however, a doubt over the left-back Tosh McKinlay who aggravated a knock in the 5-1 win over Alloa on Wednesday.

Celtic will be watched by a delegation from Hamburg in advance of Tuesday's UEFA Cup match in Glasgow. "We'd like to give them plenty to think about," said the manager Tommy Burns.



Performance of the week: Paul Merson (Arsenal), who inspired Arsenal's recovery against Chelsea on Wednesday.

A N Other

IF EVER there was a case of a half-pint getting a long way it is surely this 5ft 4in product of Port Talbot, who for more than 20 years plied his footballer's crafts diligently and intelligently from moorland to racecourse, with several changes of scenery in between. Twice he switched from white back to claret before moving south in the country of his birth. He then roved north again before settling in a robins' nest.

Last week: Jim Montgomery (Sunderland, Southampton, Birmingham City, Nottingham Forest, Sunderland).

Wilkins denies quitting as QPR queue grows

Martin Thorpe

AS MORE names are linked with the managerial vacancy at Queens Park Rangers, Ray Wilkins yesterday denied claims made by his former chairman that he had resigned the post.

While the Rangers board met to discuss a successor — Chris Waddle and Steve Coppell are the latest names being touted — Wilkins refuted Chris Wright's assertion in interviews on Wednesday that he had resigned.

"It was not a resignation," said Wilkins. "I have never walked away from anything or any challenge in my life, and I wouldn't start now. I want QPR fans to know I wouldn't walk out on them." He said the statement originally issued by the club declaring the parting mutual was "100 per cent accurate".

Wilkins also denied he had left Loftus Road because the board had asked him to stop playing. "It had nothing to do with that," he said.

Whatever the truth, Wilkins is reluctant to go back into management immediately and is listening to offers from inside and outside the game. He will hold talks with two or three First Division clubs early next week about playing for them.

"I've had a lot of inquiries from some dear old friends and I'll be contacting them all next week. I want to play on for as long as I can at as high a level as possible."

This begins today with a one-off match for injury-hit Wycombe, managed by Wilkins' friend Alan Smith.

United make Pallister a career-long offer

Martin Thorpe

MANCHESTER UNITED want Gary Pallister to spend the rest of his career at Old Trafford. The England defender, recovered from a back injury and in good form, has been offered a three-year contract reportedly worth £2.5 million and with a significant bonus at the end of it.

By then he will have completed 10 years at Old Trafford and be entitled to a tax-free testimonial.

David Batty and John Beresford must miss Newcastle's UEFA Cup tie at home to Halmstad of Sweden on Tuesday night because of suspension. Beresford's relates to two bookings from Newcastle's last campaign in

United make Pallister a career-long offer

Martin Thorpe

Europe two years ago. Batty's stems from a clash with his former Blackburn team-mate Graeme Le Saux in the Champions Cup tie with Spartak Moscow last November. Batty was not dismissed nor even booked for the incident but Fifa insisted on a two-match suspension, of which he has already served half.

Tottenham's Darren Anderson has denied he spat in the face of Vinnie Jones prior to the Wimbledon player's sending-off in midweek. "I did spit, yes, but not at him," said Anderson. "Footballers spit all the time and, when I turned to clear my throat, he ran into it. The spit was on his shorts. I think it is a disgrace that it is being suggested I spat in his face. You would need to be on drugs to spit in Vinnie's face."

Bryan Richardson, the chairman of the Premier League's bottom club Coventry, has denied that Ron Atkinson's job is on the line. "There is no crisis or talk of ultimatums regarding Ron," he said yesterday, "and, if there are any reports suggesting that I don't know where they have come from because I haven't spoken to anybody."

Team sheet

Aston Villa v Arsenal

Both teams are likely to go into this game without their first-choice goalkeepers. Villa's manager Brian Little is waiting on Mark Bosnich to prove his fitness before naming his side but the Australian remains doubtful and his deputy Michael Oakes is poised to continue. Arsenal are again likely to be without the England goalkeeper David Seaman, who is still having treatment on a hamstring injury sustained on international duty. Steve Bould is very doubtful after collecting an injury against Chelsea in midweek.

Leeds v Manchester United

Andy Cole could be drafted into United's squad for the first time since the end of his reign as Liverpool manager. Dave Beasant is back in the Southampton goal but the defender Alan Minton is still unfit. The former Liverpool midfielder Barry Venison misses a chance of leaving his old club after the recurrence of a long-standing back injury. The Czech Republic's Patrik Berger, a CS million summer signing, is likely to make his Liverpool debut, probably as a substitute. He scored for the reserves last week and impressed throughout. Jamie Redknapp is also on the verge of a recall after recovering from a knee injury and Steve McManaman and Robbie Fowler never recovered from back injuries.

Liverpool v Southampton

Greme Souness returns to Anfield for the first time since the end of his reign as Liverpool manager. Dave Beasant is back in the Southampton goal but the defender Alan Minton is still unfit. The former Liverpool midfielder Barry Venison misses a chance of leaving his old club after the recurrence of a long-standing back injury. The Czech Republic's Patrik Berger, a CS million summer signing, is likely to make his Liverpool debut, probably as a substitute. He scored for the reserves last week and impressed throughout. Jamie Redknapp is also on the verge of a recall after recovering from a knee injury and Steve McManaman and Robbie Fowler never recovered from back injuries.

Middlesbrough v Coventry

Coventry's centre-half Liam Delap is suspended following his dismissal at Chelsea two weeks ago, with Brian Borrows loaned to step in. Middlesbrough will be unchanged from the side that beat West Ham 4-1 on Wednesday.

Nottingham Forest v Leicester

Nottingham Forest, looking for their first win at the City Ground this season, will be without their in-form striker Kevin Camp-

Sheffield Wed v Chelsea

Wednesday await late fitness tests on the Wales midfielder Mark Pembrey and defender Des Walker. Frank Leboeuf could be missing for Chelsea but they have David Lee as a ready-made replacement in the sweeper's role.

Tottenham v Newcastle

Allan Nielsen is confident of shaking off a dead-leg injury in time to make his White Hart Lane debut. Spurs' manager Dario Gradi is still without the strikers Teddy Sheringham and Chris Armstrong and the defenders Gary Mabbutt and Dean Austin. Kevin Keegan has no injury worries and is expected to name an unchanged Newcastle side.

Wimbledon v Everton

Dean Holdsworth, Wimbledon's unsettled striker, is again left out of the line-up as the home side are expected to be unchanged. Everton's manager Joe Royle will wait for fitness checks on Graham Jarvis and Earl Barrett before naming his side. The teenage striker Michael Branch is on standby in case Stuart does not recover and Marc Hogter, the Sierra international full-back, will replace Barrett if he is not fit.

TOMORROW

Sunderland v West Ham

The defenders Andy Metcalfe and Martin Scott missed training yesterday but are expected to be fit, with Peter Field likely to name an unchanged Sunderland side. West Ham's manager Harry Redknapp must decide whether to start with the Dutch striker Stanislav Zastava on the left, while Marc Reeper, fit as likely to replace Steve Potts in defence. Redknapp calls up the 46-year-old Peter Souton to the squad having allowed the 25-year-old Australian keeper Steve Matkovic to join Crewe on a month's loan.

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NatWest Trophy final: Essex v Lancashire

Gooch stands between Lancashire and history

Mike Selvey runs the rule over today's finalists and finds it hard to favour Essex

IT MUST be four or five years since the moustached old fellow with the hangdog expression first told a press conference that there was not much petrol left in the tank. It must be pretty potent stuff, however, for there is no sign of Gooch pulling over on to the hard shoulder just yet.

In Birmingham on Wednesday he scored the 127th century of his career, overtaking WG's total, and technically he remains the best around. Give yards for years and he is also probably the fittest. One would be unwise to bet on today being the last hurrah for the best English batsman of his generation.

Before the Benson and Hedges final Gooch got on the

same season. Now Mike Watkinson's side are favourites to emulate that feat and become the most successful side in the history of knock-out cricket. This is Lancashire's 14th Lord's final and their ninth in these matches, the latter record matched by Warwickshire alone.

It is the 96th time they have played a 50-over match — precisely the same number as Warwickshire — and a victory would give them an unprecedented six wins in the final, and 98 in all, one more than Warwickshire.

Essex, on the other hand, have a record in Lord's finals that falls to just one of the quality of the sides they have produced over the last two decades. Though this is their seventh final, the only two have been in the NatWest. And there have been only two wins — the Benson and Hedges in 1979 and the

NatWest of 1985 when Gooch and Brian Hardie opened proceedings with a record stand of 222 — to show for it, a pality tally that only Durham and Glamorgan, neither of whom have won at Lord's, might envy.

No one will be trying harder to redress the balance than Gooch, whose century put Essex on the road to their first title, but his side will be up against it. Despite a mediocre record in the county championship, Lancashire are a mighty outfit in these games, with depth in a quality batting line-up.

Their internationals include the England captain Mike Atherton, John Crawley, Jason Gallian, Neil Fairbrother, Graham Lloyd and Watkins, and the bowlers Peter Martin, Glen Chappell and not least Ian Austin, who won the Gold Award in the July final and was Man of the



Gooch, left and Atherton... England captains at odds

Match in the NatWest semi-final against Yorkshire.

Austin has a hamstring strain, though, and Chappell a toe injury. Should either be ruled out, Lancashire may field Steve Ewerby, their rather low-key overseas player. Should he not play, we could see a rare contest involving no overseas player, Stuart Law still touring with Australia in Sri Lanka.

The presence of Ronnie Irani will add some piquancy to the match, however, since he came through the system at Old Trafford before being given his big break by Essex. Touring places are often clinched by a decent performance in the September final and, with this winter's party

County Championship Somerset v Derbyshire

Derbyshire off track

David Foot at Taunton

AS Derbyshire slipped to third place, taking only 10 points from a drawn match, they reflected wryly yesterday on a placid Taunton track which had probably lost them the championship title.

Jason Kerr was Somerset's hero, and that after being unbeaten at the close with a championship-best 68 as Somerset held out to finish on 296 with eight second-innings wickets down. The last of them falling in the final over.

Derbyshire had taken their score to 322 for six before declaring, rather later than some Somerset members felt was justified, to leave a target of 383 off 78 overs. Barnett for 141 in 200 minutes and Jones contributed 74.

When Somerset responded, Trescothick chose not to offer a shot in the second over and was bowled by DeFreitas, who also came up with a beauty which veered away from Lathwell to earn a slip catch. But Lathwell had, by then, scored an attractive half-century to sustain a productive match and a welcome return to his best form.

Somerset prematurely went into stationary mode with 14 runs in 16 overs before Ec-

clestone and Lee briefly implied there was still time for a few shots. Bowler, with little likelihood now of dinner Derbyshire team-mates, is not someone who will sacrifice his wicket willingly. He stayed for 207 minutes in scoring 60 before being stumped down the leg side by Krikken. It was an example of top-class wicketkeeping and almost as dazzling was the diving catch that eventually dismissed Turner.

Kerr came in and immediately had his stumps rattled by DeFreitas. But Kerr made it clear he had not been ready and the umpire Tony Clarkson agreed, although in the momentary confusion failed to signal a dead-ball.

Kerr proceeded to build a defiant stand with Turner for the seventh wicket as the Derbyshire bowlers toiled away, none better than Cork who shrugged off his hamstring problem and the tabloid headlines in a revitalised spell of three for 19.

All day on the boundary fringes the rumour was rife that Andy Caddick could be seen in an England dressing room. He said: "I'm entitled to renegotiate the best terms I can." Somerset, for their part, quickly made it clear that those terms should be with them as he is legally tied for two more seasons.

Surrey v Northamptonshire

Surrey strike the balance with swagger

Paul Weaver at The Oval

WHEN Blackburn Rovers beat Manchester United to last year's Premiership title it was a reminder that a championship is not always won by the most gifted collection of individuals. In the county cricket championship there are even more variables, the weather for one, and the balance. They are playing with something of a swagger these days and their maximum-points victory over Northamptonshire by 225 runs yesterday took them to second place in the table.

holding the baby, so to speak, with his captain Alec Stewart absent on paternity duty. "We have a lot of self-confidence. We just have to keep our feet on the ground. We can only be beaten by ourselves."

He added: "If I had to name the best county we have played I would vote for Yorkshire. They outplayed us in the championship, when Stemp and Vaughan bowled us out and also beat us in the NatWest, when they ran very hot, and in the Sunday league.

"But even when we look like being out-gunned, as we did when we played against Essex, with Such and Childs on a turner, we have the character to come through."



Thumbs up... by Chris Lewis, whose colleagues greet yesterday's victory with old-fashioned Surrey reserve TOM JENKINS

They are now only one point behind Leicestershire and will be at full strength for their final two fixtures, away to Glamorgan and home to Worcestershire.

"The boys here can be a rather arrogant bunch," said Adam Holloake, who was left

Holloake has proved a highly successful stand-in for Stewart, both as batsman and captain, and yesterday Surrey needed only 100 minutes to finish off Northamptonshire.

The visitors, needing 459 for victory, started the day on a hopeless 173 for six but showed some fight early on. They had reached 191 when David Ripley retired hurt after being hit on the hand by a ball from Chris Lewis but they did not lose their first wicket until David Capel was caught behind at 224. Jeremy Snape and Curtly Ambrose soon followed and Ripley did not reappear.

Scoreboard

Table with columns for County, Innings, Runs, Wickets, Overs, and Extras. Includes sections for Lancashire, Essex, and Surrey.

County Table

Table with columns for County, Pts, W, O, and Avg. Lists various counties and their performance in the NatWest Trophy.

Warwickshire v Essex

Paul Fitzpatrick at Edgbaston

NINE consecutive days of cricket is hardly ideal preparation before today's one-day final at Lord's. But, however log-weary they may feel, Essex will enter their NatWest Trophy contest with Lancashire gratified that their challenge for the county championship is still on track, as indeed is the double.

They were kept in the field beyond lunch by Warwickshire but when Ashley Giles became Peter Such's fourth victim they had won emphatically by 170 runs. Essex's remaining two games are at Chelmsford and they will feel confident that after six wins in seven games they will account for Sussex and Glamorgan as well, and perhaps finish at the top.

Smith stands firm for draw

ROBIN SMITH, Hampshire's acting captain, battled almost four hours for 91 yesterday to prevent Glamorgan winning at Southampton. His stand of 156 for the fourth wicket with Will Kendall (71) frustrated the visitors after Matthew Maynard had declared overnight.

Glamorgan looked to be on the way to their sixth win of the season when Hampshire were reduced to 39 for three, the West Indian Otis Gibson taking two of the wickets. But Smith and Kendall came together in a stand spread over 51 overs and batted through the afternoon session. Hampshire finished on 261 for eight, 70 runs adrift.

Leg-weary Essex at the double

It appeared that they might be off to London before lunch when Oeder, shuffling too far across his stumps to Williams, and Brown, guiding a delivery from the same bowler directly into gully's hands, fell in the first half-hour. To their credit, though, Lancashire remembered their standing and offered a reasonably convincing show of defiance.

Penney was the wicket Essex needed most and they were finally rewarded when, after hitting seven fours and a six in a good 70, he jabbed unconvincedly at a ball dug in

short by Cowan. The ball possessed just enough pace to carry to the wicketkeeper.

With runs to spare Essex maintained attacking fields and let Such do the rest. The off-spinner took plenty of punishment but did his job, inducing a small fatality, to leave his crease and having Smith, for 46, caught in the deep.

Pritchard, the Essex captain, was not on the field to share the back-slapping at the end: that was the last thing he needed. His back required rest after the aggravation of a long-standing complaint but he will not miss Lord's today.

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Torrance legs it for the points

David Davies at Crans-sur-Sierre

SOMETHING happens to Sam Torrance come qualifying time for the Ryder Cup. The nostrils flare, the spikes part the ground and the game is transformed from, in his word, "mediocre" to the demonstrably magnificent.

At the European Masters yesterday he got round in an eight-under-par 63 for a 36-hole 129, 14 under, and took a six-stroke lead over Paul Broadhurst, placing firmly in his sights the first prize of £127,960 — and the same number of Ryder Cup points.

his style. He had it cut four inches, and he looks like Andre Agassi, albeit without the earrings. "Can you imagine," he asked rhetorically, "what my old man would say to that?"

He was feeling his earlobe tensely as he spoke, as if the absent Bob had already torn out the offending object.

Bob was indirectly responsible for yesterday's 63. He travelled to Wentworth on Monday to give his son a lesson and spotted that Sam was swinging mostly with hands and arms; that the lower half of his body was relatively inactive. It is a classic symptom of the uncommitted and Torrance /fs acknowledged the problem instantly.

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Golf

Davies hits front with record 63

LAURA DAVIES scored a nine-birdie 63 in the second round of the Marks and Spencer European Open at Hanbury Manor yesterday, equalling the lowest score on the European women's tour. A 63 has been carded six times, three of them by Davies.

England's world No. 1 started the day six shots behind the leader Corinne Hibbard of Australia and finished it leading the field by three with an 11-under-par total of 133.

"I played all right" was the modest assessment of the 32-year-old, who could be top of both the European and American money lists by tomorrow night.

Tomorrow

ALA EQUITY & LAW LEAGUE (one day, 11.0): Southampton Hampshire v Glamorgan.

Trent Bridge: Nottinghamshire v Yorkshire.

Leeds: Yorkshire v Lancashire.

Tamworth: Gloucestershire v Derbyshire.

The Oval (11.0): Surrey v Northamptonshire.

Worcestershire: Gloucestershire v Warwickshire.

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Other match

Scarborough: Trent International XI 248-6 (12.2 Harris 80); Yorkshire 257-3 (20.3-5-2-1; Harris 10-1-4-0; Grayson 3-0-0; Cowan 1-0-0-0).

Umpires: A. Jones and M. T. Pines.

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The man who is Wednesday
David Pleat at the top of the heap
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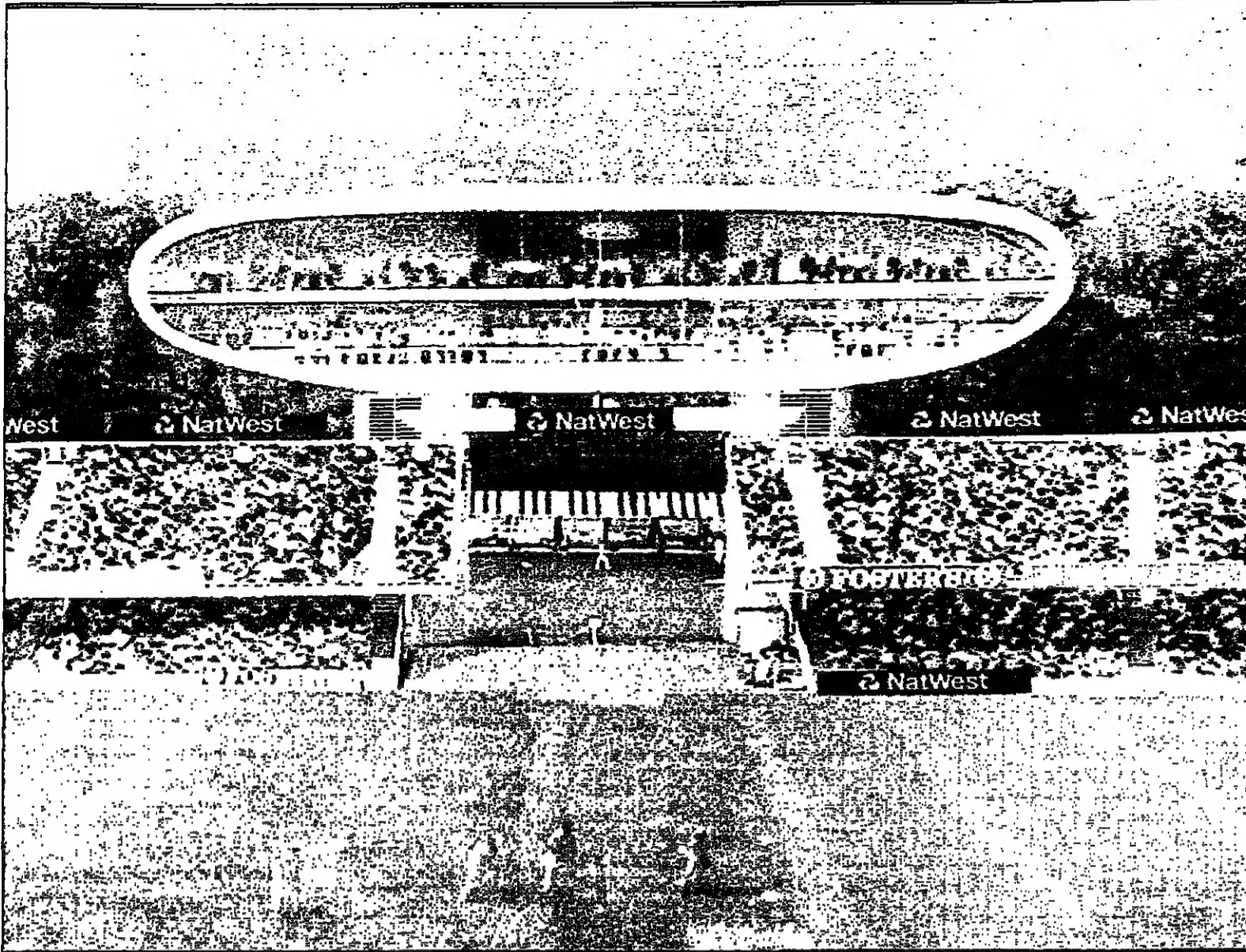


Cup Final fever
Lancashire close in on a Lord's record
23

The craft now landing at the Nursery End . . .

John Duncan

MCC yesterday unveiled plans for a £3.5 million media centre that will hover menacingly over the hallowed Lord's turf like the space-craft in Independence Day. The membership will be asked to approve the Nursery End structure, which will have space for 250 journalists and broadcasters in the coming months. Work is due to begin this winter and it will be ready for use in 1998 having been planned with the 1999 World Cup in mind. There are unlikely to be the arguments over obstructed views there were when the new Mound Stand was built in the Eighties but the Test Match Special team may be disturbed to learn that the No. 13 bus will no longer be visible.



Wilkins hears unchained melody



David Lacey

IT HAS not taken Chris Wright long to get the hang of things. Queens Park Rangers used to be sponsored by Classic FM and when they were sold to a pop music magnate this summer, there was always the chance that the club would perform to a different tune. But no. Ray Wilkins, who had managed QPR for two years, left Loftus Road on Wednesday to the accompaniment of that old boardroom favourite, Oh We Don't Want To Lose You But We Think You Ought To Go.

Someone who can pass the ball and, as Wright and Mick Jagger would confirm, age is no barrier where the performing arts are concerned. No sooner had Wilkins's departure been announced than the usual suspects had been rounded up as possible successors. These people tend to have two things in common; they have been recently employed by Arsenal and they have no intention of managing Manchester City. Had Maine Road decided, a year ago, to part company with Alan Ball on the grounds that it would be in the interests of both parties to start afresh while the season was in its early days, City might not have been relegated with QPR. Francis Lee's loyalty to Ball, who has taken down more people than the Titanic, was commendable but misplaced. Now even Asa Hartford, the Manchester City caretaker, is reported to have rejected the idea of managing the club long-term. Hartford might have a hole in his heart but not, unless he changes his mind, in his head.

Boardman's finest hour

William Fotheringham sees a record shattered at the Manchester Velodrome

CHEERED to the echo by a capacity crowd at his "home" circuit, Chris Boardman can now justly claim to be the fastest man in the world. Watched by Eddy Merckx,

the greatest rider the sport has seen, who now produces Boardman's bikes, the Briton covered 56.375 kilometres, beating by more than a kilometre the previous mark of 55.381km set by Tony Rominger of Switzerland at the Bordeaux velodrome in November 1994. Like Merckx's 49km, set in Mexico in 1972, and

Francesco Moser's two-kilometre updating of that record in 1984, Rominger's figures were regarded as unbeatable. But yesterday Boardman was ahead of Rominger's split times from the first kilometre and rode with an almost unchanging rhythm, never betraying the effort necessary to maintain a constant pace approaching 35 mph.

"I didn't think it was possible," he said afterwards. "I was very apprehensive. I was longing for it to end." Boardman paid tribute to the crowd, who cheered his every pedal stroke. "I've never heard anything so loud. Every time the cheers got louder I went faster."

The hour makes its own particular demands of those who would master it. There is no respite, as there is when climbing a mountain or riding a time-trial on the road for 60 minutes. In a velodrome there is no chance to change gear or free-wheel even for a second to ease the pain as lactic acid builds up in the body. Any shift of position to alleviate the discomfort of holding the same position risks a loss of precious momentum, and there are the incessant G-forces produced as the rider enters the bankings of the velodrome every six seconds or so. Boardman covered almost 250 laps, nearly 500 bankings.

Nothing was left to chance. The lights were dimmed in the track an hour before Boardman started so that he would not be affected by the heat and seconds before he started water was sprayed over him. The greatest challenge to the Briton came from his radical "Superman" position, arms stretched in front of his face, which gave him an aerodynamic advantage over Rominger. So extreme is the position that Boardman's hands went numb during training. Such was the pain that he had to risk losing time by changing position slightly in the final 30 minutes. But that was the closest Boardman came to being in trouble in the entire 60 minutes — testimony to a performance that made cycling history.

THE ADDITION of Ball and Wilkins to the unemployment figures provides another example of an enduring paradox, namely that the more success an England team achieve the less likely are their members to succeed in management. Jack Charlton, Kevin Keegan and Bryan Robson may be obvious examples to the contrary but they are exceptions. Of the side who won the World Cup in 1966, for example, Bobby Charlton and Bobby Moore dabbled only briefly in club management and, while Nobby Stiles, Geoff Hurst and Martin Peters stayed longer, their deeds were less stirring off the field. At least give Ball credit for perseverance. Of England's 1990 World Cup side Peter Shilton and Terry Butcher have so far confirmed the trend. Ray Wilkin, Alf Ramsey's left-back in 1966, was wise to opt for a job with more cheerful prospects. He became an undertaker. Meanwhile, back at Loftus Road, a club owed by a pillar of the popular music industry and whose chief executive is a Mr Berlin must be regretting the fact that the England centre-forward is called Shearer rather than Shearer.



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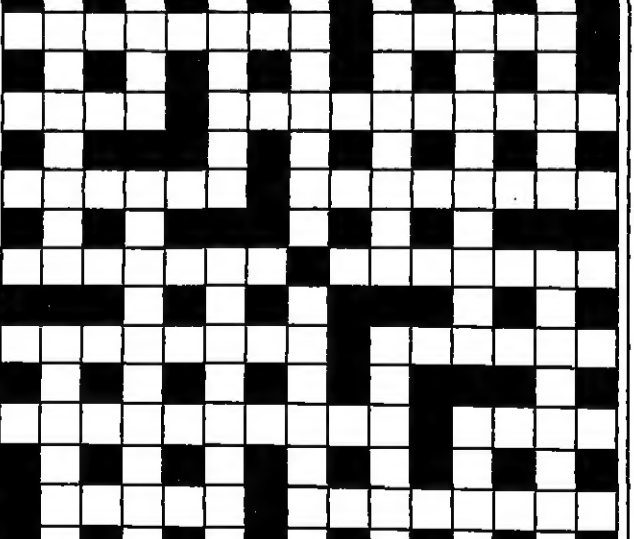
Quiz answers
(see page 14)
1. (b) Eric Cantona, playing the philosopher in a new ad for Eurostar.
2. Demi Moore, rumored to be pregnant with child No 4.
3. The Pope: the car hadn't been out of his Vatican garage since 1978.
4. Fisher II appeared on a new Church of England poster, with the line: "You're a virgin, you've just given birth and now three kings have shown up."
5. (d) A Japanese-owned glove puppet, aka Sooty.
6. (c) Graca Machel, with whom President Mandela is enjoying an "intimate relationship".
7. Stormin' Norma Major.
8. Fysek Bruno, forced to retire with eye trouble; Damon Hill, sacked by the Williams Formula One team.
9. Chelsea director Matthew Harding, who has donated £1 million to the Labour Party.
10. Jamima Khan (née Goldsmith) who has had a range of spicy sauces named after her in Pakistan.
11. (d) Peter Hobday, moving to Radio 3 after being sacked from Today.
12. (c) Tiggy Legge-Bourke, nanny to Princess William and Harry.
13. The resolutely unfashionable General Lebed, celebrating the Chechen peace accord.
14. A woman, Wendy Toms was the first woman to referee a professional football match in Britain.
15. (a) Eric Cantona
How you rates:
0-4 Vous êtes une sardine
5-9 Vous êtes un goéland
10-14 Vous êtes un chahutier
15 Vous êtes Eric Cantona

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,752

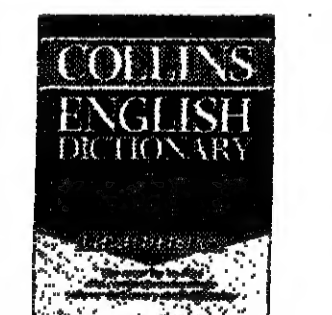
A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,752, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2AX, by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday September 16.

Name _____
Address _____

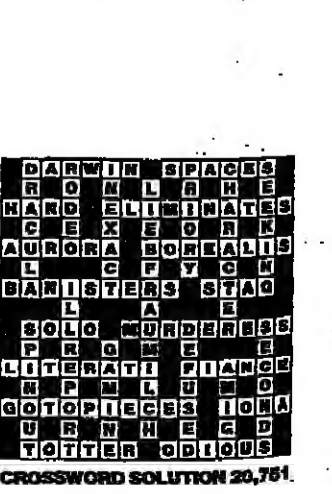
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- Set by Araucaria**
Method: Solve the clues and fit the solutions into the diagram jigsaw-wise, wherever they will go.
- A A catholic lady and a golden gun, both N (6 and 6)
 - B Start of confession by stemutator? (5,2)
 - C American style of projection (5)
 - D Princess twisted cat's tail, extending its range of sound while contracting its intestine (10)
 - E In disengagement I remain whole (6)
 - F Wildly gazed right and left after seizure, being N (10)
 - G The weightiest matter, like the image mother turned into (8)
 - H Use big guns on condition they are looking like a spear (7)
 - I Sweet for which I cry aloud (3-5)
 - J Double name for W (6)
 - K Well-disposed, sort of? (4)
 - L N lord races in French city (6)
 - M Setter's meal so spoiled by problems with marrow (8)
 - N Redolent of romance, with violins etc. playing (10)
 - O Flower of love: kiss the kisser (5)
 - P Arrangement determining shape of birds — of ospreys, literally? (10)
 - Q Writer, first-class, on a soap-bark tree (8)
 - R Piers Paul being N, and what to do with him? (4)



- S Fibre from molten waste to make galleons — nothing in it (4-4)
- T N baggage, we hear (8)
- U Jack's E state (5)
- V He was a barbarian to leave during a call at a hospital (8)
- W Forester, perhaps, in N Us with Henry and Humphrey (8)
- X Unknown article of little substance that turns things yellow (7)
- Y Spirits backed by woodpecker (6)
- Z N doctor, last with the Aids virus in the past (7)



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